Sunday, June 7, 2009 ★ Vol. 24 / No. 179

• Who among the Who's Who are dancing the rigadon at the Palace on Independence Day • Why the passion of Luli Arroyo-Bernas is in Bohol • Bea Zobel Jr. and Ben Chan join hands to help Bohol SUNDAY LIFESTYLE / • 10 ways to turn your home into a green mansion SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE / • Lopez patriarch tells all SUNDAY BIZ / • Prime Minister Brown 'dead man walking,' says UK press WORLD / • Sumilao leader shot dead in Bukidnon NEWS

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

GINA LOPEZ is on top of Kapit Bisig Para sa Pasig, the member of all Pasig River cleanups. For starters, Gina starts small—Estero de Paco, a 2-km stretch of stench from under Quirino Bridge to the Pasig. "Really bad, smelly," says Gina at the site on Friday. "People tell me if I can clean Estero de Paco, I can clean anything." (Story below) LOUIS ALCANTARA

# Church calls for protests

LIFE BEGINS AT 40 Until then, which is in October, Sen. Chiz Escudero isn't saying. MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

## Escudero: The road to Malacañang begins at 40

By Michael Lim Ubac

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY —meaning campaign fundraisers—will come.

So said Sen. Francis Escudero, whose tone and body language convey the barely contained ambition of a presidential aspirant but who steadily maintains that he is undecided that he has yet to decide.

In fact, the senator has been hopping the length and breadth of the archipelago in recent weeks, hoping that he can build a large enough national constituency to compute him to Malacañang next May.

But when Escudero, nicknamed "Chiz," sat down with Inquirer editors and reporters last Wednesday, he stressed that he had not made up his mind to run for President yet.

Asked if he would be amenable to running for vice president, the 39-year-old junior senator said:

"Like caesus lang cuco

ESCUDERO A4

## But CBCP appeals for prayers, peaceful demos vs Con-ass

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

LEADERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ARE encouraging the public to hold demonstrations "in a peaceful, nonviolent way" to protest the House majority's midnight passage of a resolution to convene a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution.

In its latest statement on the issue of Charter change, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines reiterated its position since 1997 that any amendment should be made through a constitutional convention with elected delegates.

"As we had said for the 2007 elections, we say it again: Let the 2010 election push through and not be postponed. If there should be Charter change, let it be after 2010 and via a constitutional convention whose delegates are democratically elected by the people," Jaro Archbishop and CBCP president Angel Lagdameo said in a pastoral statement issued yesterday.

"Therefore, we appeal to the House of Representatives not to pursue House Resolution 1109 converting themselves into a constituent assembly," Lagdameo said.

He added: "We appeal to members of civil society who wish to publicly protest against HR 1109 to go on with their plan of mobilization to protest the common good and national interest.

"Express it in a powerful nonviolent way in order that we may not fall into the trap that will necessitate martial law again. Learn the lesson from the past."

Lagdameo also exhorted the people to address their "prayer for peace in our country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

The CBCP first expressed its sentiment against Charter change in 1997, during the last year of the Ramos administration, when a proposal was made to lift term limits on elected officials including a ban on presidential reelection.

In July 2003, it also spoke out against a proposed shift from the presidential form of government to a parliamentary system and a proposed convening of Congress into a constituent assembly to

CHURCH A7

LAST TREE STANDING Environment advocate Sen. Loren Legarda and the reigning Miss Philippines Earth-Airlines Jessica Famularcan 10 kids on the eve of World Environment Day at PDI's Read-Along session on Thursday. RYAN LEYSON

## Loren, Miss Earth beauties read to kids on environment

By Cyril L. Bonabonte
Inquirer Research

HOW DO YOU TEACH CHILdren to care for the environment? Read them stories about crying trees and the last tree standing.

Braving heavy rains and strong winds, more than 50 children showed up for a special Read-Along session at the Bagong Lipunan Library in Makati City on Thursday to listen to stories on saving the environment.

The children, mostly third and fourth graders of Bagong Ilog Elementary School in Pasig City, learned about practices that threaten the environ-

LOREN A6

## Smokey Mountain's Field of Dreams: From shame to fame

"BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME" A softball baseball field exhibits at the once-overpriced place for the likes of Jayce Pangilinan, who can pitch a softball well enough to earn a scholarship and has dreams somehow land in the Little League World Series in the US for her pitching abilities. In the background is an abandoned building. INQUIRER PHOTO

By Francis T.J. Ochoa
Associate Sports Editor

THERE CAN'T BE A BETTER place to search for a diamond in the rough than Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila.

It is where 15-year-old softball belle Jenny Pangilinan grew up, and what she calls home. And on one of its lesser plateaus lies a new landmark that Pangilinan hopes will change the face of the movement to poverty—a garbage mound that was leveled and cleared of broken bottles and plastic refuse to form the beginnings of a baseball/softball field.

The field is an ongoing project dreamed up mainly by two men: Manuel Marquez, a project director of Gawad Kalinga-Smokey Mountain, and Chito Gonzales, an official of Little League Philippines.

In the current hierarchy of sports personalities, Marquez and Gonzales are no-name guys. But they are a whiff of fresh air at this time when squabbles among the Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Sports Commission and national sports associations take up precious newspaper space.

"When Gawad Kalinga first came to Smokey Mountain in 2004, we wanted to help the youth here," Marquez said. "We realized that by putting up baseball and softball squads, we would be able to help these children learn good values."

The teams had their practice sessions at the Rizal Park. Soon they were showing up at tournaments in various places like Marikina City.

It was during these tournaments that Gonzales and other Little League officials noticed that the Smokey Mountain squad was doing pretty well.

SMOKEY A1

## Pasig cleanup starts as families leave estero

By Cathy C. Yamsuan

A SUDDEN DOWNPOUR forced Marites Tizon and her three sons to rush back into their shanty on the bank of the Estero de Paco, right under the Quirino Bridge in Manila.

Lucia David and Josie Dasco also dashed for cover in their own homes—which are little more than cubicles no bigger than an industrial-sized freezer—in the same estero community.

As the women watched the falling rain, they were thinking that in the next few weeks they would each be watching it from inside a comfortable house with a decent roof, closets, water and electricity.

The three women have been chosen as beneficiaries of a program to relocate 600 families, comprising an estimated 3,000 people, to a site called "Bayan Ni Juan" in Calauan, Laguna, by December.

The transfer of an initial batch of 10 families will begin on Tuesday (Delayed due to bad weather -Ed.)

The Bayan ni Juan relocation is part of a massive project to

PASIG A6

## *Dengue fashion alert: Don't wear black or blue*

By Cynthia D. Balana

FORGET FASHION WEEK.

It's bad form to wear black during the rainy season as this attracts the dengue-carrying

DENGUE A7

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

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SUERTRES 7 4 7 5 9 7 0 9 4

SIX DIGIT 3 7 8 4 1 7

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# Sumilao farmer-leader assassinated

## Rene Peñas led march on Manila from Bukidnon to highlight plight of landless

By Grace Alleson and Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez, Inquirer Mindanao

MALAYBALAY CITY—Two unidentified armed men killed a leader of the Sumilao farmers, a group that actively pushed for agrarian reform, and wounded his two companions in an ambush late Friday night in Sumilao, Bukidnon.

The ambush came one day after the House of Representatives approved a law extending the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) for five years, an advocacy pursued relentlessly by Rene Peñas, 51, when he led a 1,700-kilometer march all the way from Sumilao to Mendiola in 2000 to dramatize the plight of landless farmers.

Peñas did not make it to the hospital," said Davidson Mercado, chair of the farmers' group Task Force Mapalad. "No a paralegal and elected legislator of his barangay, he helped other farmer groups and the national campaign for CARPER. His death is a great loss to the agrarian reform community."

Peñas raised his four children and sent them to school by selling his own land, eventually becoming a "known enemy" of CARP.

"He is customary to the empowerment by CARP managing, by selling the land, to send these children through college, with the fourth in her first year," Mercado said.

### Critical UN report

Peñas's murder came less than a week after a UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings criticized the Philippines for its failure to put in place measures to stop attacks on left-wing farmers, labor organizers, activists and journalists.

"The government has failed to make sufficient substantive progress and, in some cases, has made no progress at all," Philip Alston said in a report to the 11th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva this month.

"Although the number of extrajudicial executions of members of civil society organizations has greatly diminished, too many cases remain to be reported and far too little action by the military has been achieved for the perpetrators."

In 2008, the UN documented about 220 cases of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. The number of murders was reduced to 66 cases in 2007 and 46 cases last year. With TJ Burgonio and Reuters

SUMILAO FARMER-leader Rene Peñas (foreground) led fellow tillers on a long march from Bukidnon to Mendiola last year, surviving the arduous and dangerous trek, only to be ambushed and killed on the night just days after a bill extending the life of the agrarian reform program was passed by Congress. INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

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# House looking forward to meet on CARP

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES is eager to start its joint conference with the Senate next week and ensure that the final version of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) extension measure would be pro-farmer.

Akbayan party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros, a member of the House panel in the bicameral conference committee, said a number of key provisions that could run counter to the interest of the tenant farmers should be reconciled in the Senate and House bills on CARP extension.

Hontiveros said she would push for several items during the meeting set for June 9.

These are the provision that seek to dagcriminal charges on those who harass farmers and Department of Agrarian Reform employees in land acquisition and distribution schedule; limit further the conversion of agricultural lands, and retain the list of qualified beneficiaries that were limited to regular farmers only in the new version.

Aside from Hontiveros, the members of the House panel are Eduel Lagman, Rhoda Sarmiento, Benilde Garcia, Alfredo Lagbas and Arnulfo Bagarinao.

Their counterparts in the Senate are Rodolfo Biazon, Gregorio Honasan, Jinggoy Estrada, Richard Gordon, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Pia Cayetano and Francis Pangilinan.

Lagman has proposed that both the Senate and House adopt a common P1.00 billion budget for CARP.

Lagman opposed with Hontiveros that the conversion of agricultural lands into other uses should be stopped to ensure the country's food security. Lagman proposed that the voluntary land transfer be scrapped in an alternative mode to comply with CARP. Cliff Calleja and Jr. Al

# Colleges delay opening by one week – to June 15

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. in Manila and Tonette Orejas in Central Luzon

CLASS OPENINGS IN all colleges and universities have been postponed for a week because of concerns over the rising number of people infected with the influenza A(H1N1) virus, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) said yesterday.

The Department of Health has reported 33 swine flu cases, and all have shown mild symptoms. The country has the most number of swine flu cases in Southeast Asia according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The postponement of the class opening from June 8 to June 15 will give students coming from countries which have cases of the A(H1N1) virus time to self-quarantine, according to CHED Chair Emmanuel Angeles.

"We have to do this to safeguard the health of thousands of students. Classes will have to be over to avoid the spread of this new flu," Angeles told the Inquirer in a phone interview from Angeles City where he and the ambassador of East Timor were after a visit of Subic yesterday. They were scouting for a university to host the 200 scholars of East Timor.

## Rains, floods

The CHED chair ordered the postponement of classes through a June 9 memorandum addressed to heads of private and public higher education institutions, state universities and colleges, local city colleges, and regional directors of CHED.

The postponement also took into consideration the "inclement weather," he said. CHED executive director Julito Vitriolo. "Streets are flooded and traffic is terrible so we might as well delay the school opening," he said.

Students remain wise to give parents more time to "look for more resources to pay tuition," CHED noted that June 15 was a pay day.

Vitriolo said the new schedule still left within the prescribed academic calendar of opening classes not later than June 15.

## UP campuses

The University of the Philippines has postponed the opening of classes on its campuses to June 16 except for UP Manila which will open on June 15.

In a phone interview Cristina Hidalgo, vice president for public affairs, said, "We are following the CHED directive postponing the classes by a week and all classes will now have been rescheduled."

She added that Diliman chancellor Sergio Cao made the announcement yesterday.

The UP campuses in Los Baños, Baguio, Mindanao, the Visayas and Pampanga will open on June 16, Hidalgo said in a text text message.

## Open U

She, however, clarified that the UP Open University, which offers online instruction, was excluded from the postponement as of classes. "So face to face meetings are not necessary."

Hidalgo also said that the freshman assembly originally scheduled for June 9 had been postponed indefinitely.

"Please be assured that we will hold the assembly as soon as the (A(H1N1) virus) threat has subsided," read a memorandum issued by Diliman vice chancellor Elisabeth Bautista.

## UST, De La Salle

The University of Sto. Tomas earlier announced it would open on June 15 while Far Eastern University said it would start classes on June 17.

Dr. Lo Sallo University had earlier suspended classes for 10 days. Three of its students were confirmed to have caught the virus.

Meanwhile, Robert Barranger, assistant vice president for student affairs of Holy Angel University, the largest private university in Central Luzon in terms of enrollment, said the postponement of classes will "wreak havoc on the school calendar."

"But if it will help stem the tide of this epidemic, I welcome it," Barranger said. With reports from Julie M. Aurelio and AP

# Church bans close contact

MANILA ARCHBISHOP LEUDISICO CARdinal Rosales has temporarily banned close physical contact among churchgoers because of the rising number of confirmed cases of influenza A(H1N1) in the country.

As a precautionary measure against the spread of the virus, priests in the Archdiocese of Manila have been told to place the communion host in a person's hand and not in the mouth, and to prohibit the holding of hands during The Lord's Prayer.

"It's only for the duration of the crisis," Rosales told reporters yesterday in Xavier School in Greenhills where he led the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Bombog Parish and Religious complex.

"It's not only in the Philippines, this kissing done in Catholic churches in many offices, it's not good to avoid spreading the virus," Rosales said.

Fr. Gerardo Glean, who heads the liturgical ministry of the Archdiocese of Manila, said the advisory was sent to all parish priests on Friday. Doris Pilar-Gagate


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# GMA gets air deal, gas; Medvedev gets advice

By TJ Burgonio

IT TOOK PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S personal intervention with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to get an air agreement between the two countries off the ground.

Meeting on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum Friday, Mr. Medvedev assured Ms. Arroyo he would instruct the Russian Transportation Ministry to approve the air agreement that would lead to flights between Manila and Moscow and boost trade and tourism between the two nations.

"The signing soon of this air agreement is one of the major accomplishments of this trip," said Press Secretary Cerge Remonde in a briefing aired over government-run GMA radio.

The Philippine government had been pushing for the air pact which got tied up in Russia's Ministry of Transportation.

In their 45-minute meeting, Medvedev explained to Ms. Arroyo that the delay in approving the pact was a "mere bureaucratic matter," and that he would instruct the transportation ministry to act on it.

Before flying in St. Petersburg, President Arroyo met with Philippine businessmen officials in Moscow who lamented that the lack of direct flights between the two countries was hobbling their tourism program.

During their meeting, Ms Arroyo was also able to convince Medvedev to divert some of Russia's liquefied natural gas (LNG) to other countries in Asia, including the Philippines.

"President Arroyo asked that Russia commit some of its LNG to the rest of Asia, and President Medvedev accepted this," Remonde said.

Russia supplies LNG to Japan, the United States and South Korea.

Ms Arroyo and Medvedev also agreed to bolster defense cooperation by setting up defense attaché offices in both countries, Remonde said.

"The two countries have started by hosting defense attachés in both embassies, and they will be the ones to look to in the military and defense cooperation of the two countries," he said.

Medvedev in turn asked Ms Arroyo to sponsor Russia's admission to the Euro Asia Economic (EAEC), an economic forum held by leaders of 18 countries in the Euro Asian region.

But Ms Arroyo explained that Russia must only now exercise its membership—that of being a dialogue partner and having a history of security and cooperation with Asean—and that it had to improve on the third criteria, substantive relations with member countries.

"That's why the President suggested that Russia expand its trade with other Asian countries," Remonde said.

Russia has been seeking since 2006 to join the Forum, whose members include the 10 Asean countries and four dialogue partners (full members: Australia, Japan, China, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand).

Ms Arroyo, and her party, including First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, were expected back in Manila before dawn today.

# Troops killed 30 MILF rebels, wounded 20, says military

SOLDIERS SEIZED A MAJOR MILF base rebel base in two days of fighting in Maguindanao province, killing 30 guerrillas and wounding 20, an army spokesperson said yesterday.

The MILF claimed the military also suffered a heavy death toll, but Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr. dismissed the rebel group's claim, maintaining that there were no deaths on the government side, and only five soldiers were wounded after nearly 48 hours of heavy fighting across Guindulungan town.

Shortly after the fighting subsided, three explosions rocked Datu Saudi Ampatuan, also in Maguindanao, early yesterday morning, but no one was injured in the incident, the military said.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Peters, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels might have been behind the attacks, as they executed a day after the heavy clashes on Friday.

The first improvised explosive device were off in Barangay Crossing Salvo, 50 meters from the Saudi Ampatuan police station, around 3:30 a.m. Citing a report from the 64th Infantry Battalion, Peters said a jeepney stopped at the same spot before the explosive were off.

An around 7:30 a.m., Peters said two 60-millimeter mortar shells exploded in Barangay Lower Salvo, some 100 meters from the police station. "The bombs might have been intended for military convoys traversing portions of Datu Saudi Ampatuan and Datu Piang," he said.

Brawner said the blasts may be part of the rebels to prevent the military from pursuing the rebels involved in Friday's encounters.

The military believes the regular faction of wanted MILF commander Ameril Umbra Kato was responsible for the explosions that happened in the wake of the death of 30 rebels on Friday.

"The bombings are part of their grand plan to disrupt normal life in the area so that rebel goods would continue to come in," Brawner said.

The military has been pursuing the forces of renegade MILF commanders Kato, Abdullah Macapaar alias Commander Bravo, and Alexis Sabanan Pangalian for attacks around Central Mindanao since the collapse of peace talks with the government in August last year.

Reyes reported that dozens of bullets were found after the firefights on Friday inside concrete bunkers, as well as a large cache of weapons, munitions and explosives in the rebel base near Guindulungan town.

"We bombed their positions. We fired 4 rockets and the soldiers entered the rebel encampments, which could accommodate about 200 rebels," he said, adding that about 28 guerrillas were wounded, based on electronic and radio communications intercepted by the army.

Meanwhile, in Islamic militant hotbed Basilan, where two suspected members of Abu Sayyaf were captured on Friday, the military said yesterday.

Marine troops attacked a jungle hideout of the Abu Sayyaf near Tipo-Tipo town, killing a suspect and capturing another, said Capt. Ned Almeda, spokesman for a counter-terrorist task force based in Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City.

The raid led to the capture of Ramon Limaps, accused by police of being behind the abduction of two female hostages last year. The two victims were freed unharmed after two months of captivity. One of the freed hostages was also dead in a firefight with the troops, Interior said.

The Abu Sayyaf is alleged by the military to have received financing from the al-Qaeda network of Osama bin Laden and provided training facilities for Jemaah Islamiyah militants operating elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Edu Punay, Roberto O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao; Nirvy Quiroz inside Manila, Reuters and AFP

The Manila Doctors Hospital (MDH), one of the country's leading medical institutions seeks its commitment to world class excellence with the unveiling of its new cardiovascular facility. Equipped with the most advanced technologies in cardiac care, the facility showcases the hospital's latest acquisition – the Artis Zee Biplane System from Siemens.

A state-of-the-art catheterization laboratory system, Siemens Artis Zee Biplane offers advanced imaging functions for interventional cardiology and radiology. With its breakthrough versatility, improved visualization and enhanced workflow, the system enables physicians to save time for its patients with greater speed and precision while increasing its productivity and functionality in cardiac care.

MDH has expanded its patient services to include Coronary Angiography, Coronary Angioplasty, Hemodynamic Studies, Pacemaker Insertion, ICD Insertion, Peripheral Angiography & Vascular Angioplasty, Echocardiography, Pulmonary Hemodynamic, Atrial Septostomy and Vena Cava Filter Insertion. Apart from cardiology and radiology, the Artis Zee Biplane is also deployed for various applications in neurology and pediatrics.

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## Tight watch on SC nominees urged

WATCHDOG GROUPS monitoring the appointment of new justices to the Supreme Court pushed ahead of the 10-day deadline over the Judicial and Bar Council's short list of nominees for President Macapagal-Arroyo's consideration.

Supreme Court Appointments Watch (SCAW) and Bantay Korte Suprema (BKS) made the announcement ahead of the JBC's discussion on Monday on the short list of nominees it would submit to the President who will decide who should fill the seats left vacant by the retirement of Justices Alicia Martinez and Dante Tinga on April and May.

Theo Lanuza, a SCAW convenor, said vigilance over the appointments was made all the more significant in the face of reports come the tribunal would soon be tackling the issue of whether the Senate and the House should vote jointly or separately in a constituent assembly or amend the Constitution.

"This is the current issue," Lanuza said in a joint news with the JBC.

Rev. Francis Pangilinan, a former JBC member and one of the leaders of EDSA, said if the senators choose the Constitution had made the appointments watch "more critical."

"With the passage of the Cha-cha bill in Congress, it is now expected to pass through the Supreme Court, where President Arroyo has currently appointed 13 of the 15 justices. Cha-cha has made our work crucial," Pangilinan said.

"Now more than ever we need to ensure the separation of powers of the branches of government. We need to safeguard the integrity of our nation and our people," he said.

Of 14 candidates interviewed by the JBC, SCAW said seven believed that the two chambers of Congress should vote separately. Ramon Bernardo

## ERRATUM

In the advertisement of "Mahal Ko Bayan Ko" which came out on this paper on June 06, 2009, the word "OF" was inadvertently omitted on the title. It should have read "BEYOND INCUMBENTS, THE GOOD OF COUNTRY ABOVE ALL"

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# US to look into fund messes–Kenney

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—UNITED States Ambassador Kristie Kenney on Thursday admitted that her government was bothered by reported anomalies involving fieldwork funds and the revised program for reformists.

"We will surely go back and look into it because it's very important to us that these funds go exactly as the right people," Kenney told the Inquirer during the Brigada Eskwela, which she participated in, at Tabiawan-gay National High School here.

Kenney said the allegations of irregularities in the disbursement of Balikatan funds and the payment of reward money to civilians who inform on terror suspects—both US-provided funds—must be investigated.

But she said she would first have to meet with General Torres of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Victor Ibrado to discuss the anomalies.

Philippine Navy Lieg. Nancy Gadian had alleged that Philippine commanders overseeing the Balikatan joint military exercises between Philippine and US forces had diverted most of a P40-million fund intended for the Filipino units to themselves.

Stafford Baker Colin Simonds and professor Octavio Hontiveros, both former Abu Sayyaf kidnap victims, urged the US government to look into how Philippine military officers ended up with most of the reward money intended for civilian informants on terror suspects.

Dinampo said a Subi village official who helped locate the grave of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani, had complained about receiving only a small portion of the reward the US government had put up for information on the late head of the terror group that is on the US's Most Wanted list.

"It turned out that he (informant) and his relatives got pennies compared to the lion's share taken by the facilitators (one handler of the reward money)," Dinampo told the Inquirer.

Kenney said the US government "does monitor and track it (reward) carefully."

"But any time we are alerted to any irregularity, we'll look at it and take it seriously," she said.

Kenney said that, so far, the US government was pleased with the reward program because "it helped turn our valuable information that saved lives."

Lt. Lt. Estrellita Ocho, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, challenged Dinampo and others claiming the reward system was anomalous to "show proof."

"Bring (the issue) to the proper venue, such as the courts," Ocho said.

She said the payment of rewards was above board.

"The awarding is witnessed by US Embassy and Philippine government officials. It means that proper documentation and records are done and kept by them. So it is not really difficult to have proof to support the prosecution of the guilty since they have all the proof," she said.

## Erich G. Buñag; 40

ERICH GUSTAVO BUÑAG III, EDI, KING, Marikina City, and Antipolo City died on June 5 at the age of 40.

He belonged to High School Batch 1985 and B.S. Economics Batch 1989 at Ateneo de Manila University.

He is survived by his wife Karen; daughters Kaitlyn and Erica; a sister and four brothers. His remains lie at Dr. Luzviminda Memorial Homes in Sto. Niño, Concepcion Uno, Marikina City, where a wake will be held until June 7, as Loyola Memorial Park Marikina after the 5 p.m. Mass at the Our Lady of the Abandoned Church in Marikina.

## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, June 7, 2009
Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
1st Reading: Dt 4:32-34, 39-40

Moses said to the people, "Ask of the days past, beginning from the day when God created man on earth. Ask from one end of the world to the other: Has there ever been anything so extraordinary as this? Has anything like this been heard of before? Has there ever been a people who remained alive after hearing as you did the voice of the living God from the midst of the fire?

"Know, therefore, and call to mind this day, that the LORD is God in the heavens above and on the earth below, and that there is no other. Keep his statutes and commandments that I command you today, and everything will be well with you and your children after you. So you will live long on the land which the LORD, your God, gives you forever."

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22
R. (12) Blessed the people God has chosen for its own.

Gospel: Mt 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Jesus, they bowed before him, although some doubted.

Then Jesus approached them and said, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples from all nations. Baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to fulfill all that I have commanded you. I am with you always until the end of this world."

Commentary

Through the intelligent use of our human reason we can come to know that God exists. By reading the wonders in which he has worked we can also come also to find to have been inspired by an intelligent and powerful God. But who is this God? What else can we know about Him?

Through our human reason alone we can know very little more about God than this one term. We find that we need for us to remain ignorant of His love for the human race. For this reason, God intervenes in the history of the people of Israel, revealing Himself as a God of compassion, understanding and patience. In the fullness of time, God would send into the world His only begotten Son who would, by His death and resurrection, reveal to us the depth of the Father's love for us. By sending the Holy Spirit into our world and into our lives we are made capable of living our lives not only with the knowledge that God exists, but with the confidence that comes from knowing that we are called to live as sons and daughters of a God who will step at nothing to show us His merciful love.

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# Escudero: The road to Malacañang begins at 40

From page A1

group. Why so he could[n't] believe [He'll be free to choose, as he's also high].

"I'm just dreaming. It's fine. I haven't made up my mind. I'm exploring," he said.

Sharing how dreamers are already acting out his ambition to "succeed" to the President, the senator said he is not about to declare who he is not yet qualified.

He is technically not yet qualified to run for president as he does not turn 40 until Oct. 30, well outside the deadline to apply for candidacy.

Candidates for president and vice president must be at least 40.

"I'll declare after I turn 40 to guarding my intention or absence of intention," said Escudero, the second youngest senator, after the 38-year-old Alan Peter Cayetano.

For a change

To comments that he looks experienced and has not held an executive position, Escudero said: "Maybe that's just what is needed now, someone without experience, just for a change."

His relatively short time in politics should not be taken against him, Escudero said.

"Have you met a politician who, when he entered politics was already a frail person, then became a saint later?

"It's a basic fear. If I say too much in politics, if I walk until I'm there age, I might not have distinction from who and whom they are," he said.

The "possibilities and chances" are so many that stepping too long in politics would get one's hands dirty, he said.

The Senegon politician, who came led impeachment case against President Macapagal-Arroyo when he was in the House, discounted talk that his was the President's secret candidate.

"If I run, I will not run under the administration party," he said.

And he would oppose any attempt by his party, the Nationalist People's Coalition, to run Senate with the newly minted administration bailout Sampl-CMD for the 2010 polls, he said.

Reminded that Mr Arroyo was one of his wedding sponsors, he said: "But King [deposed President and convicted plunderer Joseph Estrada] is my wedding godfather, too."

Besides budding a large enough political base, Escudero said the ability to secure a campaign fund to finance teams was equally crucial.

"Those would be sums of the considerations," but at the end of the day, "it should still be your decision."

'They will come'

But Escudero noted that in his experience in the 2007 senatorial election showed, the money will just pour in from benefactors.

"If you build it, they will come," he said.

He said he spent a total of P84.9 million in his senatorial bid, said that part of the amount came from his party.

He said his decision to run would be entirely his, despite speculation that whether he runs or not will be decreed by the NPC leader, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., son of the country's wealthiest and most powerful businessmen who is believed to be a supporter of the President.

"The decision in one is a personal decision. I have to own the decision to run. It is up to spearheading," he said.

Escudero said his meetings with the would-be kingmakers have been "infrequent, contrary to perception." He said those were mainly social encounters or NPC affairs.

He denied back the issue of his links to the controversial businessman, a crony of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, as his rivals: "As any candidate, declared or undeclared, do you think they are not asking for their [businessmen's] help? Do you think they would not be grateful if they receive help?"

Chiz or Loren

His party, the NPC, has already canvassed down the choice for the party's presidential standard-bearer to Escudero and Sen. Loren Legarda.

Will it be Chiz-Loren or Loren-Chiz?

"I'm still open to possibilities," Escudero said.

He said he did not expect a clairvoying down of the field of presidential contenders in the run-up to Nov. 20, 2009, the deadline for the filing of candidacy certificates.

Knockout period

"Instead, the field is becoming crowded. This is a knock-out period. People would like to knock out certain candidates, that's why some candidates have devoted everything they've got for so many months now," Escudero said.

Asked if he will run on one ticket running for President only, he said: "The possibility is still there. It's already June 5. I'm still here [having well in the senate]. It's encouraging."

According to Escudero, the issue in the 2010 presidential campaign will be "work, work, work," meaning jobs.

"The next government should restore meritocracy damaged by this administration by promoting accountability and transparency and addressing the issue of corruption head-on as the major hindrance to development," he said.

"It should focus on enhancing our competitiveness and productivity in order to attract investments, create jobs and address problems associated with education, health and the environment."

And the next President should carry a continuing investment-creating reform agenda to that the people can have a direct access to the presidency, he added.

Political career

Escudero was a youthful 28 when he was elected to Congress in 1998. He was the sorby leader after he left the House of Representatives in 2007 to run for the Senate, serving the second highest number of votes with 16-million.

He received almost all his education in the University of the Philippines, where he studied from primary to law school. He earned a master's in international and comparative law, on a scholarship, at the Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

He was named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines in 2003 in recognition of his "selfless dedication" as a youth leader.

In December 2007, he was the only Filipino to make it on the Asian News Network's list of Asia's Most Outstanding Political Leaders of 2008 in recognition of the top 200 to 300 young leaders from around the world for their "professional accomplishments, commitment to society and potential contribution to shaping the future of the world."

He is married to Christine Elizabeth R. Flores, a singer and songwriter, and is the father of twins Maria Cecilia and Joaquin Cruz. With Norvo Quiamcabo

CAUGHT ON Gina Lopez talks to her staff, foreign guests and stakeholders during a tour of the Estero de Paco near the Paco pumping station in Manila. She says she's really interested in a group from Massachusetts, "who do artificial wetlands, which can clean water water and look aesthetic at the same time." EDWIN BACASMAS

# Loren, Miss Earth beauties read to kids on environment

From page A1

economy from environment advocate Sen. Loren Legarda, outgoing Miss Philippines Earth titlist and award-winning storyteller Dyell Jones.

Before reading from the book "Crying Tree" by Mary Ann Ocfemia, Pineda, Legarda taught her young audience the importance of planting trees serving as a "carbon sink" that absorbs poisonous gas from factories and vehicles.

"Crying Tree" is about young rubber tree shedding tears over the death of their grandfather tree in the hands of irresponsible loggers. The book was published by ABC Educational Development Center.

Miss Philippines Fire Mary Tabuena narrated "Ito Bahaynin" about the adverse effects of improper waste disposal. It was written by beauty titlists Cathy Untalan and Ilarina Rae de Leon Sarmiento and illustrated by Jhen Sevilla. Both were blue Astrid Weiss, and published by Adarna House and Miss Earth Foundation.

As Tamolak read the story Ade Adventure Man Philippines-Eco Tourism), Michelle Bruno (Miss Philippines-Air), Alexis Go and Immaculate Mossed (Tenth Miss Philippines Earth Runner-Up) played the roles of animals exposed to plastic and other toxic wastes left by humans to bodies of water.

Recycled props

To make their performance more visually attractive, the beauty queens used props and costumes made of recycled materials.

Jones used lampara Books' "Say Hailing Paper" by Richard Bayanin, a story about children initiating lessons with neighborhood and environmental campaigns after coming down the last tree in their city.

From the Miss Philippines Earth titlist, the children learned to segregate wastes into biodegradable wastes and to wean discarded materials as much as possible.

Their three Read-Along participants were Tara, 6, Grade 3 student, said she learned a lot about taking care of the environment from the session. "Now I know that it's bad to throw garbage in the sea because fish could die from pollution," she said.

Her mom parent Jessie, 14-year-old CJ Bernardo, said the story "Ang Hailing Puno" or his favorite "because the kids helped each other to saving the tree. I liked that part best. I learned how important it is to plant trees for the good of the world."

Jessie Sun-an, a teacher at Bagong Bayan Elementary School, said the Read-Along participants would help spread the lessons they had learned not only in their schoolmates and friends but to their parents as well. Digna Aguirre, coordinator of the Literary Hour of the Diocese of Pasig City, said she and the other teachers also learned a lot from the Read-Along session.

Interacting with kids

The Miss Philippines Earth titlists were in town, and they had been interacting with the children. Tamolak, an education graduate, said hopeless Read-Along gave her a chance to combine the two things she is most passionate about: Teaching and promoting environmental protection.

Legarda, who also represented the Senate office at Diane Rose Avenue right after a tree-planting activity with 30 ambassadors at Luneta Park in Manila, told the hopefuls: "I painted trees when I was 8 years old. Now that I'm 60, I plant trees."

The senator said she spearheaded the planting of millions of trees along the South Luzon Expressway and in other areas of the country.

After the session, the senator's staff turned over 150 copies of "Ulan sa Tag-araw," a drama dance on climate change produced by Legarda, to Miss Earth Foundation and hopefuls Library.

Thursday's Read-Along session hosted by Mega Gaeta of Inquirer Corporate Affairs was held in cooperation with the Office of Senator Loren Legarda, Miss Earth Foundation, Library Hub of the Philippines and Bagong Bayan Elementary School.

Mhel Dobblebay and George and Robert Co. provided prizes for the children who joined the Question and Answer portion.

Love of reading

The Read-Along, launched in May 2007 by Inquirer Resources, Library and Junior Inquirer, aims to promote the love of reading among children through story-telling sessions with celebrities and volunteer readers.

In 2008, it received an award of excellence from the Philippine Quill, an award given by the International Association of Business Communicators. Recently, it was also cited by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Philippine Federation of Teacher Institutes for making the Philippine Daily Inquirer a culture-friendly newspaper.

The next regular Read-Along session will be held on June 13 at the Inquirer main office in Makati City. Those interested may contact Ellen Capanzo at 897-8800 local 350 for reservations. Slots are limited and are given on first-come, first-served basis. With a report from Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

# Pasig cleanup starts as families leave estero

From page A1

clean up the Pasig River and its tributaries called the Rapid Risig Otcs Sa Pasig.

Sunny Balbuena (BK), the environmental arm of the ABS-CBN Foundation, is the force behind the Rapid Risig cleanup.

Census, survey

Bayan Ni Juan promises not only to be a cleaner and healthier home for the relocated estero dwellers. According to the Expelling Hospital, they will be provided with the means of livelihood to ensure that they are not forced to move out for lack of available jobs.

Last month, BK conducted a census among eight barangays occupying the three kilometer stretch of the Estero de Paco, from Quirino Avenue to Barangay Ermita, to determine where the displaced families would be relocated in the Bayan Ni Juan.

After the 15-day survey, the names of the settlement candidates were submitted to the National Housing Authority, which chose 10 families following a screening process.

Each candidate family was asked to exhibit documentation that included family photos and marriage contracts or affidavits of cohabitation for unmarried couples.

Screening

Corpuz said the purpose of the screening was to ferret out those families that had already been awarded lots in other government resettlement programs. Those such families were disqualified.

The heads of the families were asked to sign waivers indicating that they were moving in Bayan ni Juan voluntarily.

They were also asked, as a goodwill gesture, to start dismantling their shanties, something that many already did early this week.

The NHA is providing the houses to be occupied by the first 10 families by June 9.

The staff member dislocated the schedule demolition with permission by the drivers Gina Lopez, managing director of the ABS-CBN Foundation, who arrived on the scene before noon. From the re-settlers will travel to Calauan with Gina Lopez to paint the houses in assigned to them.

Houses for the remaining 56 families will be built by volunteers from Habitat For Humanity, a project partner.

Unlike previous resettlement sites, Corpuz said Bayan Ni Juan will feature livelihood projects like tilapia aquaculture and handicraft and rag-making and dressmaking, among others.

Duane said she has heard that relocated families may also avail of small loans to start businesses.

Anxious to move out

"My plan is to set up a business. I really wish I could be among the first batch to leave the estero. The problem is I still lack some documentation needed by the NHA," she said.

Tacas, who lives with her tricycle driver husband and three sons in a squalid shanty made of canvas, plywood and tarpaulin, said she is very anxious to move out. There is no running water or electricity, everyone uses kerosene.

"I want to transfer to an environment where my boys can learn good behavior. I don't want them to grow up uncouth," she said.

Tacas, 33, is nursing her infant son who is suffering from pneumonia, aggravated by the smoke from the neighborhood dump and the smoke from the kerosene lamp.

She suspects that her 9-year-old son has already joined a gang of solvent boys, street children who inhale substances like rugby or glue to get high.

Veteran of 4 demolitions

David, whose family of two children and common-law husband shares a 7 x 3.8 cubicle with another family, has lived beside the estero since before many residents.

A veteran of four demolitions, David, 30, said this time she took good about moving and never returning to the bridge.

"I really want this to work. In the past, when our shanties were demolished and we were forced to move out, no one provided us with jobs. We were forced to come back here because this is the life we know," she said.

"I want to have my own house, one with a real roof so I don't have to rush outside to cover it with plastic every time it rains," she said.

Sleeping on sidewalk

She said that only the children sleep inside the shanty. All adults sleep on the sidewalk outside.

Bruno, 40, shares living quarters with seven other families. She enjoys a certain queen here status among estero dwellers because she owns a television. During evacuations, Duane's 14-inch black-and-white TV and old electric fan are always given priority.

She admitted frankly that "we have a jumper" for sourcing electricity.

Gina Lopez admits that the plan to clean up the Pasig was ambitious.

But she insists it is workable, if people would cooperate to be involved.

"There's really no way to clean this river unless everyone works together," she said.

'Clean and Green'

Former First Lady Amelita Ramos began a "Clean and Green" project that also aimed to clean up the Pasig during the term of her husband, President Ramos.

Lopez is targeting the students and businessmen to help in the cleanup.

She also plans to conduct an intensive awareness program to help the estero dwellers "shift consciousness."

Lost Friday a flood control team from the Metro Manila Development Authority brought a group of foreign scientists who inspected and studied the downstream movement of the Estero de Paco.

According to Lopez, with the foreigners were a group of "Australian water experts" who were involved in a similar project in Jakarta, Indonesia.

She said there was another group from Korea both that had designed "technology [that can] transform the sludge that will be dredged from the estero into organic fertilizer."

A third team of scientists from Illinois, architects with experience in artificial wetlands and wastewater cleanup is also being tapped.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim has promised to re-establish pumpboats and mini-gondolas along the stretch of the Estero de Paco once the cleanup is completed.

# AFP shrugs off Biazon warning

LUZON CITY—THE CHIEF OF the Armed Forces' Southern Luzon Command yesterday shrugged off the warning on Friday of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon that restive soldiers and officers might take the streets and rallies to protest the passage of House Resolution No. 1109.

"The good senator fully knows that the military should always be apolitical. And it will remain that way," Maj. Gen. Roland Ordoñez said in a phone interview.

Ordoñez reminded soldiers and their superior officers assigned in the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions to desist from committing unlawful acts and remain loyal to the chain of command.

"Political gamesmen should be kept left in the unlawful leaders' dirge to nowhere," he said, adding that the military leadership was duty-bound to follow only the directives of duly constituted authorities. (With T. Medler Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon)

DISMANTLING MONUMENT TO POVERTY Smokey's softball holler practice on the playing field made possible by the relentless efforts of Manuel Marquez, project director of Ejercito Kalinga Smokey Mountain, and Chito Gonzales, an official of the Lingap Philippines. Behind: The bases are old, worn-out removable pads that have to be packed up after each game lest garbage pickers calculate them for recyclable material. Beyond, the murky Marikina River. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY LINGAP

# Church calls for protests

A-5 newspage

under Charter amendments.

And in January 2006, the CBCP reiterated that "Charter change is best done through a constitutional convention" and that "the reasons for seeking constitutional change must be based on the common good rather than on self-serving interests or the interests of political dynasties."

Said Lagdameo in the CBCP's latest statement: "We then ask the question which needs to be asked again: Is the proposed shift precisely for genuine democratization that effectively develops power and enables civil society groups to participate more in governance?"

"We believe that at the bottom of our political chaos is a crisis of moral values, a crisis of truth and justice and of social solidarity for the sake of the common good and genuine peace."

### Free expression

Maliksi-ating will make no attempt to stop the planned street protests against HR 1109, including the one on Quezon Avenue on June 10, according to Antiway Bloks. President Mwapagal insisted on peaceful spokesperson.

"Persons activities are free expressions protected by the Constitution and therefore respected by the government," Gokay said. "The government will not interfere in the House of Representatives.

"We know this motion to the independent to expel him is not our government. At this road of the day, the people will still decide us in fact," he said.

Civil society and militant groups have accused Malacañang of masterminding the passage of HR 1109, purportedly to allow Mr. Arroyo—and her allies in the House—to remain in power beyond 2010.

But Golez said: "The Palace does not have a hand in the recent moves by Congress. Although we don't deny that part of [Rep. Arroyo's] platform supports political and economic reforms through Charter change, the initiative and the facts as it shows to go ahead is entirely Congress' because [these are] dependent on the decision of Congress."

Golez reiterated that Malacañang's assurance of elections in 2013 was clear.

He said the administration and the Commission on Elections were "geared up for it."

### Compliance

Mario Erjo Ria, Bukidnon governor of the new administration party, LaKas-Kampi-CMD said on Friday that HR 1109—which calls for a constituent assembly and the Senate on proposed constitutional amendments—would be sent to each senator and not the Senate, the environment.

But whether the motion to declare the resolution or not, the House would proceed to convene the constituent assembly, Arroyo-ruled.

The plan is for each HR 1109 to each senator for endorsement was intended to preempt protests by the Senate, Lakas-Kampi-CMD senator Prospero Pichay said yesterday.

"When [the congressional] body the joint session, they won't be accused of not informing the senators," Pichay said in a phone interview.

"It's some form of compliance... that they received the senators [on a joint session," he said.

Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III said Malacañang would respect the congressional strategy.

"We may not necessarily agree with the decision, but we respect it," he said on the phone.

But Bello added, Bello said the executive department "can't do anything" if the constituent assembly would lead to Charter change.

Told that Mr. Arroyo, who chairs Lakas-Kampi-CMD, could vote in her allies in the House, he said: "That doesn't apply at all times, especially when you're talking about a serious political decision that is Charter change."

Bello also maintained that the party's not preparing for the May 2010 elections.

He also reiterated that the Senate majority led by Senator Prospero Nograles should dialogue with the angry public to head off another tense political situation.

### Ask the people

Sen. Francis Escudero said that in order to avert a political crisis, the people should decide in a plebiscite or a referendum whether the Constitution should be amended or not.

"This way, no one for Charter change will have their approval. To save on money, we can even have it on a date in the 2010 election," said the presidential hopeful not chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments.

Escudero said the people had much to gain or lose if the 1987 Constitution were amended.

"We should not second-guess them. Let them settle the issue once and for all," he said in a statement.

Escudero also said politicians should take the back seat but instead lift support to the fight against efforts to amend the Charter through a constituent assembly.

"If I have to watch out of the Senate to let with the people in the streets, I will do so. But let the people take the lead in showing [Charter change] is not," he said. With reports from TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila; Cecile P. Rivera in Bacolod City.

# Smokey Mountain's Field of Dreams

From page A-1

"I saw Manny's (Marquez) team and I wondered when his players picked up their skills. I asked him where they practiced," recounted Gonzales.

"At that time," Marquez said, "we played in a vacant lot. But then a church was built on it. Then we played in another open lot owned by [Smokey Mountain developer] Fraglit Ventures. But that lot was sold, so we lost another playground."

### Pangilinan and friends

Building a playing field for kids would later evolve into one of the priority for over a non-profit organization like Ginawad Kalinga despite the fact of its founder, Tony Meloto, to give Smokey Mountain's residents decent housing, regular sources of livelihood and education.

Except that there was Jenny Pangilinan, who would pitch a softball well enough to earn a college scholarship from the University of the East (UE).

There were so well her schoolmates at the nearby Ignacio Villegas Vocational High School, who also received college scholarships because of the sport—Virlyn Ann Rojo at Adamson University and Rose Anne C. Gwen at the University of Santo Tomas.

Neither Rojo nor Llave imagined that there'd be a field in Smokey Mountain.

"When I first learned of it, I couldn't even remember it. I kept wondering how they did it," Llave said.

"I was surprised when I heard about it because all there is here is a dump," Rojo said.

Trained mostly by Emmanuelito Llave, a physical education teacher at Antonio Villegas Vocational, the girls showed they had enough talent to play them through college.

It wouldn't have been a coincidence that in the recent season of the University Athletic Association of the Philippines, State's Lady Falcons won the women's softball crown, Llave's Lyceum finished second and Pangilinan's Lady Warriors placed third.

And it is ordinarily no more thrilled of luck than last year, Pangilinan played for a team in the Little League World Series in Bellaire (Texas), Michigan, in the United States, and drew more from scouts and observers for her pitching abilities.

She also led the team to a second-place finish.

### Changing the image

"I never imagined I'd get that far," Pangilinan told the Inquirer one rainy Thursday morning. "When I look at myself in the mirror, I wonder how someone so frail can excel in a sport."

Marquez and Gonzales wanted to take Smokey Mountain's far more talents in the hope of giving its residents a shot at improving their lives and, at the same time, change the image of their home.

"Everywhere in the world, when you say Smokey Mountain, they think of kids living and playing in a garbage dump. In some countries they tell these videos of children playing with cockroaches that is vintage," Marquez said.

"He launched this slogan, 'We call it Team Home to Have,'" he said.

Then did Marquez and Gonzales embark on the mission to build the softball baseball field, which drew still resistance from

persons to whom they pitched the idea.

But they were relentless. When Meloto won the right to host this year's basketball and softball Philippine games, they proposed that a field be built on Smokey Mountain and that the games be played there.

Marquez went to the Manila Sports Council (Manaco) to plead his case; Gonzales spoke with officials of the National Housing Authority (NHA).

Then officials of the Manaco, NHA and even the Metro Manila Development Authority came to take a look at the site.

"But everyone was reluctant," Marquez said. "All they saw was garbage. They were scared that children might hurt themselves stepping on broken bottles."

### Last card

Marquez and Gonzales drew their last card—the story of Jenny Pangilinan.

When the officials learned that a shaky, wispy teenager had struck out girls her age—and older her elder—here and everyone, they realized that putting up a diamond on a mountain of refuse might indeed make the difference for the residents.

Truckloads of a mix of garbage soil, sand and gravel started arriving, and the thousand-of-field slowly began to emerge.

Not only that: Smokey Mountain's became one of the venues of the recent Philippine Series.

"People came to watch the games," said Gonzales. "There were incidents when teams from Alabang and Muntinlupa needed exercising. But eventually, they showed up and realized that games can be played here."

Michaella Llave, 20, an international student senior at De La Salle University who also plays softball, dropped by to check out the modest field.

Her verdict: "It doesn't matter if there's a mountain of garbage behind them. This field can be very important for the kids there."

Our uncle had is Marinella's sister, 16-year-old Agnes. She plays for Antonio Villegas Vocational and hopes to play college ball someday.

### 'It is safe'

The impression of the dream isn't lost on Pangilinan, who has now speaking new playing venues in various parts of the world that will entice watchfully at the sight of the field that is in five-minute walk from the impressed building where she lives.

"When you say Smokey Mountain, all people think of are garbage and troublemakers," Pangilinan said, now on defensive mode. "We have people who will graduate with honors this year. We have students taking up nursing and engineering."

Pangilinan said she once asked her 28-year-old mother to go to see in Smokey Mountain. "They were all scared. They kept asking me if it is safe to play here. Someday, this field will change all that," she said.

That day may be a little farther down the road. At this point, the field is devoid of grass seriously carpeting softball or baseball diamonds. The spread of gravel only runs so far until puddles arise a windy rain.

The perimeter is ringed by bamboo poles surrounded by green fishnet—undoubtedly sufficient deterrent of wild balls are home runs.

Because the field is so small—about half the size of a basketball court—even the weakest of hitters can send a ball past the fishnet perimeter and once a ball flies out, it rolls down the dirt path that leads to the road, which is the only thing of its kind in the area. which sits at the fringe of a garage patch that separates the field and the murky Marikina river.

The bases are old, worn-out removable pads that Bonnaventhe Llave has to pack up after each game lest garbage pickers calculate them for valuable recyclable material. And someone catching to steal third from second will have Smokey Mountain's highest perch for a view.

### Faith

But one thing is clear. The foundation for change has been laid.

"Like the movie (Field of Dreams) says, 'If you build it, they will come,'" Gonzales said. "As long as we keep improving the field, the kids will come to play, and other known how many lives will be changed? For sure, there are also more Jenny Pangilinans out there."

It's going to take someone Marquez and Gonzales have yet to find to turn the field into another Wrigley Field or Fenway Park, but, then, along with Pangilinan, have only faith, to continue to build up their field of dreams on.

Then again, you know what they say about faith and acceptance. *With reports from Cecile P. Tapos and Mark C. Chicoy*

# Dengue fashion alert: Don't wear black or blue

A-6 newspage

mosquito, the health department said.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said yesterday that black or dark blue objects attract the Aedes mosquito, the dengue-bearing mosquito that feeds on human blood. Light colors are supposed to be unattracting the dengue virus.

Interviewed by Vice President Makati Gudoy on his weekly radio program, "Ano Sa Iyo, Bayan," Duque said dengue was more local than the influenza A(H1N1) virus in "there is no known cure or vaccine for dengue other complications set in."

"The dengue-carrying mosquito is attracted to clothes in black or dark blue colors as well as metallic hues," the health secretary said in Filipino.

Duque also said that the DOH recorded 6,000 cases of dengue since January this year, although the figure is 50 percent lower from last year.

He attributed the decline to the health department's year-round information campaign against dengue, unlike in the past when the campaign would start in June or during the rainy season.

Duque said that every household should implement preventionary measures to stop dengue or what he called the Four S: Searching and destroying all breeding areas of mosquitoes, seeking early consultation for any symptoms, saying "no" to mosquitoes, Fogging, and self-protection by using mosquito-repellent lotion and bed nets.

There are four strains of dengue (DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3 and DEN-4) and all four were reported in the Philippines last year.

### Dengue downed Duque

Symptoms of dengue may include the sudden onset of high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain and rashes.

"I had dengue so I can familiarize with the symptoms," Duque said in Filipino.

According to the World Health Organization, some 2.5 billion people—two-fifths of the world's population—are now at risk from dengue. The WHO estimates there may be 50 million dengue infections worldwide every year.

The disease is now endemic in more than 100 countries.

Health officials advise school officials and parents to keep their surroundings clean and to ensure stagnant waters from containers where dengue-carrying mosquitoes may breed.

# Heeding the g
# to care for Mot

***With today's declining forest cover, increasing carbon footprints, and alarming rate of global warming, it is timely to remind Filipinos about an oft-forgotten plea to take care of the environment. The theme of this year's World Environment Day, observed on the fifth day of June as declared by the United Nations (UN), says it all: "Your Planet Needs You – Unite to Combat Climate Change."***

One corporate organization that takes the UN call seriously is SMART Communications, the Philippines' leading wireless service provider, which joins the world body in its efforts to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment and enhance action.

Aware of its nationwide presence and the huge responsibility that goes with having the largest number of mobile subscribers in the country estimated to be at least 27 million, SMART has declared that it "cannot afford to ignore the responsibility to lead and contribute to efforts to institutionalize sound environmental practices in the telecoms industry."

SMART Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan, who also chairs the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), has emphasized the need for the private sector – particularly the companies he leads – to help the country meet the UN's Millennium Development Goals, which includes environmental sustainability.

"The times offer us the opportunity to commit more support for programs that will mitigate the plight of many, if not the majority, of our countrymen. So we say it, our current programs are the appropriate response to this critical situation, and must be vigorously pursued," he said in a speech during the recent annual membership meeting and 20th Foundation Day celebration of PBSP.

SMART teamed up with Globe Telecom Philippines, Inc. (GMRP) for a nonpolitical tree-planting project that plans to plant a total of 50,000 trees in Sitio Kalbario, Barangay Sapang Cawad, Bulacan (SK) Village in Iloilo, Iloilo and Bulakbulak district of Bulakbulak.

## Trees for the future

Taking the cue from its chairman, SMART has embarked on a nationwide tree-planting campaign as a cornerstone of the company's environment program that it expanded to take on new elements and added breadth to the tree focus.

SMART's ongoing drive runs parallel to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) initiative called Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign which aims to plant seven billion trees this year. It is the company's modest contribution to the country's efforts to reduce global carbon emission.

SMART Chief Wireless Advisor Orlando B. Vea noted the importance of institutionalizing an environment program and ensured its impact on future generations of Filipinos.

"Since SMART is the industry leader, we feel it is our responsibility to sustain and amplify the company's efforts to shape a better and greener tomorrow for our current and future subscribers," he said.

In line with promoting environmental conservation, SMART and its employee volunteers have been conducting tree-planting activities in various areas nationwide since 2003.

Under a three-year tree-planting program forged between the PLDT Group and Japan's leading mobile communications company NTT DOCOMO last year, SMART was able to plant more than 160,000 seedlings and propagules in various areas across the country in 2008 alone.

Planting sites included Bataan, Quezon, Cebu, Iloilo, Negros Occidental and Oriental, Sarangani Province, Davao, and Tawi-Tawi. This year, SMART is targeting to plant a total of 300,000 more seedlings and propagules.

For its extensive tree-planting initiative, SMART has found an able partner in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and its attached agency, the Forest Management Bureau (FMB).

## Green consciousness

SMART Head of Wireless Customer Division Dondi J. Weiss pointed out that SMART's environment

SMART

# lobal call
# ther Earth

PLDT-SMART Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan

program could not possibly take off without the commitment and involvement of its employees who provide the energy and enthusiasm necessary for a sustained drive.

"Environmental consciousness starts in the cubicles and ballistic to the various departments and divisions of SMART until it reaches a point where

In June 2007, SMART conducted an environment awareness campaign for its employees with activities that included a seminar on global warming, film showing of the documentary film "An Inconvenient Truth" and an exhibit on the company's initiatives for the environment.

Through its "Kabalikat sa Kalikasan" program, SMART has been promoting a culture of environmental protection and conservation among its employees and among communities nationwide not only through tree-planting activities but also through other impactful measures.

To reduce the company's carbon emissions, for instance, SMART's Administration and Materials

> **"Since SMART is the industry leader, we feel it is our responsibility to sustain and amplify the company's efforts to shape a better and greener tomorrow for our current and future subscribers."**
>
> — GILBERTO R. ICO
> SMART Chief Wireless Advisor

SMART Head of Wireless Consumer Division Cecilia J. Padilla

Management Division has institutionalized an annual inventory of its greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) while conducting environment measures and activities that include the reduction of electricity consumption, biofuel testing, "Sabik Basura" and waste management.

SMART has been recognized for its commitment to climate protection by the Philippine Greenhouse Gas Accounting and Reporting Program (PhilGARP), which trains businesses and organizations on GHG management using GHG Protocol standards and tools.

Last year, the company – along with PLDT – was cited for its participation in the "Bulb Battery" program of the Ortigas and Mandaluyong Marketing Corp. and the PBSP, contributing to the preservation of the environment through the responsible handling and recycling of used lead-acid batteries of ULABs.

## Earth Hour initiatives

In March, SMART supported Earth Hour 2009, the worldwide event calling for action on climate change, led by global conservation organization World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-Philippines). On March 28, SMART turned off the lights on its billboards and building facilities in various parts of the country from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. as a gesture of commitment.

At the same time, SMART urged its employees to join Earth Hour 2009 via a campaign that included daily eco-friendly tips via email and online posters. SMART also partnered with Philips Lighting Philippines to conducting a talk on energy efficiency for employees and a "switch" campaign that enabled SMART employees to replace incandescent bulbs at home with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) at discounted prices.

In partnership with Earth Day Network Philippines Inc. (EDNPI), SMART also started a tarpaulin recycling project in the PLDT-SMART Amazing Grand Kalinga Village in Imus, Cavite – one of its eight adopted GK villages nationwide.

SMART is hoping to duplicate in GK Imus the success of EDNPI in the Earth Day Village in Antipolo City in this village, members of the community recycle tarpaulin donated by EDNPI's partner companies into bags – earning when the finished products are sold back to the tarpaulin donor or other prospective buyers. Residents of GK Imus were taught how to make usable and sturdy school bags, tote bags, grocery bags, and utility cases using tarpaulins from giant billboards and rain-coat stores.

## Renewable energy

Consistent with its "green" corporate mindset, SMART's Network Services Division is also implementing the use of wind power systems, fuel cell-ion, electronic power savers, DC fans and coolers and cost-effective lightings not only to reduce carbon emission but to generate savings as well.

SMART is the leader among mobile network operators worldwide in using wind energy to power its cell sites, according to a GSMA Development Fund survey of 25 mobile operators across the developing world that use renewable energy sources.

"Based on our research, SMART is the most advanced mobile network operator globally in terms of wind-powered base transceiver stations. SMART emerged as the operator that has most extensively deployed stand-alone wind-powered cell sites," said GSMA Development Fund Director Dean Philip Thornton.

By end of the year, there will be 74 SMART cell sites across the country powered by renewable energy. Of this figure, 47 are run by wind energy while 27 are hybrid – using both wind and solar energy.

For its program promoting the use of wind and solar energy to power cell sites in remote areas of the country, SMART won the newly introduced "Green Mobile Award" at the prestigious 2009 GSM Association Global Mobile Awards in Barcelona, Spain last February.

SMART's "Alternative Power for Cell Sites" program uses renewable energy sources to power cell sites in "off-grid locations" or areas where setting up and operating a cell site is not normally feasible.

"We are proud that a Philippine company has won the first green award to be given by the GSMA. Given the growing global concern about climate change, this is a very relevant and meaningful award that will challenge us to do more," said SMART President and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno.

SMART President and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno

With its thrust to go green, SMART illustrates that caring for the environment can be the business that taps a corporate organization's campaign to seek value from business results other than the bottomline. As this happens, organizations and individuals across the country and the world take cognizance of SMART's proven role as an industry leader and innovator. SMART's small steps are becoming giant strides.

Chief Wireless Advisor Gilberto R. Ico proudly accepts his award for SMART's Earth-Friendly cell sites program at the 2009 global congress of the mobile phone industry. The win was a first for a Philippine company.

GLOBAL MOBILE AWARDS 2009

**The Green Mobile Award**
**Smart Communications**

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OPINION

# Reverse mentality

EDITORIAL

IF LTSG. NANCY GADIAN IS "MALIGNING" ANYONE, it's her former superiors in the Western Mindanao Command, specifically her former chief Lt. Gen. Eugenio Cedo whom she has accused of misappropriating Balikatan exercises funds. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, however, seems incapable of separating the forest from the trees, and considers any accusations against its officers an indictment of the military as an institution.

Navy Spokesman Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo has been pulling out all the stops in "challenging," as he puts it, Gadian to submit to an investigative panel established by the defense secretary to look into her allegations. Gadian, according to Arevalo, "should not... court public sympathy if only for the sake of her fellow soldiers who fought and died in the name of the noble profession of arms."

To begin with, our soldiers fight and die, not for the "noble profession of arms" (for to merely die on behalf of "soldierhood" would make them mere mercenaries) but rather for our country. A country composed of civilians and soldiers who are surely united in opposing all forms of corruption, whether committed by people in or out of uniform.

Arevalo went on to point out that if Gadian wanted a fair trial, she should give "the organizations and the persons she accuses, whose reputations are being maligned in public" a fair shake by submitting to the "proper forum." (Where have we heard this mantra before?) This is the sort of maneuver that reflects a boys-into-men-ing, an old boys' club attitude that puts a premium on not rocking the boat.

But whistle-blowers, by their very nature, are out to rock the boat; and if the AFP top brass feel (things aren't) on an even keel, it is because they, and not the whistle-blower, cannot distinguish between personalities and institutions. It is not an affront to the AFP to accuse individual officers of wrongdoing. The best organizations have their rotten apples; only when the barrel's rightly tended are all the good apples inside in danger of ending up in rotten as the single rotten one.

Indeed, Gadian's decision to have her allegations in detail to the media, is perfectly understandable considering she fears for her life. She has sought sanctuary among nuns and has applied for a writ of amparo from the Supreme Court. The behavior of the AFP—to throw the book at her, and to consign her for daring to reveal, publicly, what is so far has officially refused to investigate from the perspective that officers accused of fielding funds ought to be the ones in the dock, and not their accusers—only fortifies Gadian's assertion that she's in mortal danger.

That officers on the verge of retirement take advantage of "projects" to avail themselves of a golden parachute for their retirement is, unfortunately, something often whispered about our top brass. A military zealous about its reputation would have a zero-tolerance policy toward even the tiniest whiff of scandal concerning its generals. A whistle-blower, after all, in truly law-abiding societies is embraced until or unless, in the process of investigation, her/his allegations are disproved.

It is rare as if every allegation against top officers dipping their private hands into public funds has been disproved. It is rare as if corruption doesn't plague the AFP. It is not as if the AFP has anything to lose if it puts the accused officers in the dock, and grants them the opportunity to vindicate themselves.

But instead, the AFP is engaging in machismo-exercising a whistle-blower. Which is a waste of time and a symptom of a dangerous—because stubbornly unaccountable—mentality. A reverse mentality, where the "presumption of legality" is so extreme, it makes those demanding accountability the ones held to account first.

The AFP should throw the book at Gadian only after it dispenses with the charges that cry out for resolution, and not before. After all, if her charges are proven, the AFP will owe her its institutional gratitude. If, according to a credible investigation, her allegations are disproved, the credibility of the process will clear and vindicate the accused officers.

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# The teaching of the Filipino student

SEPARATE OPINION

*Isagani A. Cruz*

THIS BEING THE FIRST SUNDAY OF JUNE, most of the schools will open tomorrow, inviting again the small fry in the nursery and kindergarten levels, followed by the elementary, the high school and, finally, the tertiary level. Some will be starting their first year in school, while others will be returning to their classes after a long vacation. Whatever the case, they will be entering a new world of learning, which will open their minds to the wonders of knowledge.

I remember my first day in school. It was in the Legarda Elementary School on a "rating year" because I was only 6 years old. I became a regular first grader when I reached age 7 by passing. I could read my birth certificate, which my father had to show me, as a substitute for a birth certificate. There were two entrances to the school, one for the principal, the teachers and the parents, and the other a big yard behind where the students lined up every morning when the bell rang to signal the start of the day's classes. I was a piece played on the piano by a beautiful girl while the principal watched like a tiger on sentry.

The teachers wore demure dresses for the ladies (no jeans) and coat and tie for the gentlemen despite the tropical weather. There were no prescribed uniforms for the students, and they came in whatever attire they preferred or could afford. Most of us boys came barefoot. There was then time I was chosen as one of the much officers of Boy Scout that paid a call on Governor General Frank Murphy in Malacañang. I suppose had him and had our picture taken together, not realizing at that time that we would in the future serve as justices of our respective Supreme Courts. I lost that valuable photograph or would have proudly published it in this column.

In the Mapa High School, one of my classmates used to pass by for me on to go to the National Library in the basement of the Legislative Building near the City Hall of Manila. I think we exhausted all the adventure books there from "The Three Musketeers" to the "The Prisoner of Zenda." Bladeco 4 Alas, that was my close friend, became our valedictorian, and I was salutatorian because I was the editor of the Magazine, the school organ, whose I labeled a teacher, who threatened to sue me. She doubted when our principal, Mrs. Sarah M. England, said the teacher would have to sue her first.

I first came to the University of the Philippines when it was still housed in Padre Burgos, Manila. I loved it at first sight and spent my most pleasant days in that place until it transferred to Diliman, where I did not follow. The special attraction to me of UP was the atmosphere of intellectual inquisitiveness and freedom, of literary originality and expressiveness, of the physical attractiveness of the young ladies, of the relentless effort to be the best, and, of course, the monthly sonata and the community singing where even the UP president participated.

There was one of those advantages when I transferred to the MLQ College of Law on my second year of the Law course, that excited the best law faculty in the whole country headed by Dean Lourdes S. Montes, in charge of Commercial Law; Land Titles and Deeds, and Taxation; Justice J.B.L. Reyes overseeing us in Civil Law, Political Law handled by Sen. Lorenzo M. Tañada and Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion; Justice Antonio G. Bautista and Myla Labrador in charge of Remedial Law. Criminal Law assigned to Prof. Manuel O. Chan and Superio Espinosa Jr., and Legal Ethics to the hands of Prof. Augusto Sumulong. (And there was also the lovely Casting, but that's another story.)

When at the organizational meeting of the new Supreme Court in 1986, Chief Justice Claudio Teehankee asked the members to identify their respective schools, the answers came quickly and proudly: "Ateneo," "UP" "UST." When my turn came, I said without embarrassment, "MLQ" and loudly added, "when it was the best." The chief justice replied serenely, "Of course!" and nobody laughed or objected. Everybody concurred.

Everyone has some warm memory of his or her Alma Mater, and that initial season is the one I am fond of narrating. I hope you have your own incident to proudly remember among the many lessons you have forgotten.

# Missionary, not mercenary

MOMENTS

*Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, STD*

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A HUSBAND and wife who had a big quarrel, and were not talking to each other. It was a stalemate. Whoever talked first would lose. The husband had to take an early flight so he gave a written note to the wife which said: "Wake me up 5 a.m. tomorrow." The next day, the wife ran at 7 a.m. angry and mad for missing his flight. When he looked at the pillow beside him, there was this big written note from his wife which said: "Wake up! It's 5 a.m., you will miss your flight!"

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mt. 28, 16-20) the risen Lord entrusted the disciples to spread to the whole world the good news of our salvation, "in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We too are supposed to be busy communicating the presence and the love of the Trinity. What have we done, what are we doing to help spread God's love?

* * *

"When they saw him, they worshipped, but they doubted." How many of us are worshippers, but are doubters? Doubting worshippers? Yes, we believe in God's power, but we rely on other powers as well. We are moral and insecure, and many times we do not have full trust in God's power. The next line of the Gospel reading should dispel whatever doubts we have. "All power in heaven and earth has been given to me." In humility we say, "Yes Lord, we believe. Help our unbelief!"

* * *

We have a three-fold mission order from the Lord: to go make disciples of all nations, to baptize them in the name of the Trinity, and to teach them to observe all that He has commanded us. We are supposed to be the One in the military way, which is an identity of obedience, and accountability in all means and by whatever means. In contrast, we are to do this the missionary way, which has the Trinitarian component: clarity of purpose, purity of heart, and presence of love. We are not mercenaries. We are missionaries called by the Trinity, sent by the Trinity, accompanied by the Trinity.

* * *

If we listen long and well enough to the Trinity, our way of doing mission must lead us into what our SVD superior general, Fr. Antonio Pernia, SVD, calls the "four Fundamental Conversions," namely: From activism to contemplation (being a missionary doing missionary things); from individualism to collaboration (God's mission over my mission); from emphasis on dialogue (proper core evangelization); from only evangelizing to also being evangelized (learning new preaching.)

* * *

A lot of misunderstanding and distrust can be avoided in life if we do it the Trinitarian way, which is to allow dialogue between and among us, filled with respect, understanding and love. Dialogue is a longer and a more tedious way of doing things. Someone said he doesn't like a "dialogue" because "basta madaya ka at mailagay ka pa" (i.e., the task of being elected could change). The other way of doing things is by monologue, wherein one person, one culture or religion dominates and imposes on others, and we have seen the havoc and disunity wrought by such bias and egotism.

* * *

Let us not dwell and continue this Trinitarian dialogue wherever we are, and whatever we do. Parents for example, must continue to dialogue with their children; employers with their employees; superiors with their members, and so on. Being with our commitment to dialogue is our vigilance to point out and not allow dictatorship and abuse of power in our midst and mine. Hello! This is the Philippines, and this is 2009!

* * *

And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." What an assurance, what a comfort to know that God, the greatest power to know and to control, is with us always, and forever. As we celebrate our mission, especially when we encounter trials, deprivation, loneliness, rejection and even persecutions, let us go back to this one blessed assurance. Let us not lose heart—He is with us. Let us not lose patience—it is His work. Let us not lose love—it is, after all, because of His love, with His love, and through His love that we have been called and sent. In the end, all we can say is to God be the glory, to others His grace and His bounty, and to us His mercy. Amen.

* * *

PHILIPPINE EID CENTENNIAL JUBILEE!: In our minor anniversary days, we still experienced the presence of our founder O. Arnold Janssen to have the presence of the Trinity acknowledged and felt every 10 minutes all throughout the day. At work, at study or at play when the bell rang, we all would stop and say together the "Quae Est Hora Propre." Join us then as we say "God, Eternal Truth, we believe in You; God our strength and our salvation, we hope in You; God infinite goodness, we love You with all our heart; You have sent the Word as the Savior of the world, make us one in Him, fill us with the Spirit of your Son that we glorify Your name. Amen."

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, remind me that I am your missionary, not your mercenary. Amen.

# Neither fraud-proof nor error-free

WITH DUE RESPECT

*Antonio V. Pangalangan*

AS E-MAIL THREADS FOODED LAST SUNDAY'S "Pacquiao nightmare," One comment concerns the automated online and internet dangers of automating our 2010 election. In response, let me say that computerization hastens the counting and canvassing of the votes but it is not fraud-proof or error-free. Neither will it eliminate "guns, goons and gold." Special Medical Action Group Chairman Gen. Cesar Drilon (Jul. 13, 2004), who said that reckless computerization could bring "the grim prospect of elections based on a massive scale by means of just a few keystrokes."

I will not speculate on what technological defects could bug this electronic machinery or why some fear that the Comelec is procuring, in their collective judgment, to computer viruses and determined hackers. Like all well-meaning citizens, I do only want that the full hands and attorneys of the commission will duly perform their jobs and that the appointed chairman will be fair.

Neither am I ready at this time to pass upon the claim of Transparent Electronics org.ph, led by former Comelec Chair Christian Monsod, that the Smartmatic automated election system adopted by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in the ARMM—hardware procurement and, thus, is vulnerable to fraud.

But here, let me discuss something real: (1) our experience with our first automated election in 1998, and (2) the presidential contest in 2000 between George W. Bush and Al Gore, which nearly plunged the United States into a constitutional crisis.

**Losing to Comelec.** The May 11, 1998 election in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was our first experiment with automation. Similar to the DRE currently adopted by the Comelec, the system used in the ARMM was the invention of the candidates. Instead, ballots with the pre-printed names of the candidates were handed to the voters who simply shaded the oval spaces opposite the names of their chosen candidates.

The ballots were then fed to an optical scanning machine that counted the votes and printed out the results. The process took away the discretion of the board of election inspectors in appreciating the ballots, thereby eliminating human intervention. Unlike the manual system, the automated ballots were not counted at the polling places. They were brought to a designated central where the scanning machines were located.

On May 11, 1998, Comelec officials noticed that, in these ballots, the oval space opposite the name of a candidate in Pata, Sulu (a part of the ARMM) was shaded but the machine did not count them because the ovals had not been completely shaded (the machine had not detected the shading). In exercise, the Comelec ordered the stoppage of the automated counting in the entire province of Sulu, not just in the voting center where the defect in the machine was detected. Soon the news of the failure (not yet the results) of the elections was brought to the Comelec headquarters in Manila, where they were manually counted.

In Tarug vs Comelec (April 14, 1999), the Supreme Court upheld the Comelec's manual count of the automated ballots. Since the automated machine "failed to count the votes correctly that were not machine-related," the Comelec resolved to be prevented from "hindering above the problem," because the law "did not prohibit manual counting when machine count did not work."

I (formerly) took the majority ruled by the above were our rules on how to manually count electronic ballots. The rules on manual counting would not be used in appreciating automated ballots. These rules were peculiar to hand-written votes, not to machine-shaded ballots. That was good, for instance, in determining whether a ballot was written by one hand or two hands, but not in appreciating the voter's intent via the mere shading of pre-printed ballots.

**Bush vs Gore.** A similar question arose during the 2000 U.S. presidential election. The electoral votes at all 51 states—except Florida—showed Al Gore slightly ahead of George Bush. Under their automated system, Florida votes inflicted three choices "through ballots to be punched through a machine." Gore contested the result over a deliberate omission, but not been perforated for the machine to count them. In some cases, a piece of the ballot (a chad) was hanging by two corners. In other cases, there was no appreciation at all, just an indentation on the ballots. The Florida Supreme Court ordered a manual count for all the "undervotes."

Should these imperfectly punched ballots be manually counted? If so, Gore's victory would be settled, if not, Bush would win. To Gore's jubilation, the Florida Supreme Court decreed a manual count for all appeal. The U.S. Supreme Court, in Bush vs Gore (Dec. 12, 2000), reversed the verdict, holding that "the use of standard but manual recount violated the equal protection clause."

Despite widespread media hoarding and despite assuming the popular vote final and the electoral votes of Florida for Gore, I accept the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that the counting is the main solution for the world's only super power. On Dec. 8, 2000, during my watch as chief justice, Gore said via Time magazine it was from that decision to a national crisis would have imposed from the country. "The Supreme Court has spoken. Though I disagree with the decision, I feel a duty to respect and obey it," he calmly said.

History failed, but decided a similar electoral intervention never during our 2010 presidential elections, I wonder what it would happen. Be alert!

*Comments are welcome at chief.justice@pangalangan.blogspot.com*

# When the circus comes to town

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I LIKE WHEN THE SCARLET WAG-ons rolled in.

First there were the men in skin-tight t-shirts with a range of ceramic, hair-bag ropes to and-eared elephants on a big fancy field of wet grass. Then the exercise-ringed up, ropes hitched to stakes, and there it was, the big top, a great round tent over a cordoned stage.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the most spectacular show on earth, where

**METHOD TO MADNESS**

*Patricia Evangelista*

fighter. Watch him stalk, see him stare, listen to his voice as it echoes in the tent. Tremors ardent? Doesn't flambock inhale? Pure nerves. The amazing, the astounding, the astonishing! Step this way, step this way, watch your feet, watch this seat. Listen? Tigers? Zebras? Giraffes? Monkeys?

Step this way boys and girls, step this way.

Watch the tightrope walker as he negotiates the line a hundred feet overhead, balancing on a rope clutched by a pudgy drunk native under an hot clown. Watch her put famous the board. Now tense, take the risk, hold the rope.

Watch the muscled superman, standing on the stage as his bright pink spandex tights. Look at his face, you've seen him before. He came round a bank's glassed all over the city. See him prune as the Bathrobe pop. Watch him as he goes through his act to polite applause. Watch him, because no one else will.

Watch the magician, tall and thin and mad, as he launches an axe his ear and his words roll out like a well-oiled train. Watch him put down his sequined lapels, adjust the cuffs of his dark waistcoat. Trust me, he says, trust me. Then close your eyes, to the whirling scarves and dancing bulb and the opposing tables. Listen to him as he says everything and nothing, and then open your eyes—what they see, watch. Then open your eyes, and see the waves clang at his feet.

Listen to the fortune-teller, in the semicentre all, even the cash that will go to hell. Watch the leopard acted, as he whirls overhead, watch his sweet and bored and long, dreaming over and twirling in the air. He must laugh. Best laughter. Watch the trapeze artist of the gymnasium, as he leaves one hand and still he spins. He is safe in the air, where he answers to no-one else, and no one can call out his line.

Step this way, boys and girls.

Send in the clowns, says the middling crowd. Send in the clowns.

They come, one after the other. One has drops of sweat painted on a smooth white face. Sweating is for peasants to exert effort on a muscle pumped by two hurling little clowns. They come the ring, the big bellied, mustached old clown with the rubber gun and grilled pompadour. He blows rainbow bubbles into the faces of pretty girls. He swaggers under the bright lights, the black of his face paint is melting under harsh lights, creating even wrinkles. A long time ago, he had stepped into the act dead on ridiculous and hopping at this occasion he had caught in the gilded wagons. A suddenly angry crowd had tossed him out of the big top, swearing never to re-touch his native name.

Now he hears the jeers, boos and slurs of old glories, outmoding and backflapping before a crowd chanting his name.

Watch the pretty lady dressed in flowers, sitting bareback on the white horse. Are her smile. See the old clown behind her, and watch as she eases when she rejects her horse. Listen to the crowd as they scream at the pretty lady, watch them as they dare when she leaps into the mire of the old clown, who gives her a smacking kiss.

Boom, goes the drum. Bang, goes the gun. The lions are let out on stage. They paced the edges of the smallest stage, letting out the occasional roar, as small children clap and a few scream. Then the lions roared, and the tent was filled with whip. There is a close attendant, a chery from the ringmaster crowd, but it is the ringmaster who steps out instead. The lion-tamer has left the big top, for sure. The guy is too small, the crowd too big, and in the circus, it is the performer who sometimes has to pay the crowd to watch.

But the lions are let out, and then the whole story. There is no end that the lion tamer killed one too many time with loosening him to touch his whip. They are one of the lions caged, and a loose in the streets. They say the lion tamer is afraid. Not even sweet and grown can hide the stench of death.

And on this way where the clowns look for apples, watch the female in their cages. Nothing is responsible, everything for your laughing pleasure. See the bony shoes, see the emphasis every begins. Grotesque. A stuffed lion for the little lady? Row low. The point is falling, but the show goes on.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the most spectacular show on earth, where entrance is free—but the price you pay is the price you pay. Where the most comes down and the clowns head to town.

The "SOS: Leadership Forum" will replay on ABS-CBN's Sunday's time at 10:30 p.m.

## THEY SAID

### Unchallenged

"Perhaps, what the senator from Cagayan de Oro meant as a statement was the way she said it and failed to have his way. Does the senator want to have his way in the Senate because even two doesn't tangle with him. That was why he developed some sort of intellectual arrogance that he now displays."

—Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, former Senate president, reacting to Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.'s statement that the opposing lawmakers against Sen. Manuel Villar can't run a show run the Senate

### Powerful backers

"If he is not the assistant, I'm going to tell you now truthfully that those are many very powerful people who are backing Secretary Teodoro. And they said that if it's not [him as standard bearer], they will look there [for] another one."

—Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, former Senate president, on reports that people of Noah Sec Gaudiosa, Defense Secretary Teodoro Defensor, if the latter declared candidacy for president, after withdrawing as cabinet.

# Educating Americans about Muslim voices

WORLD VIEW

*Vidyabhūṣa A. Desai, Kareem Brooks Hopkins and Harūṣpha Tūl*

NEW YORK—PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA HAS extended an open hand of friendship in his landmark Cairo speech to the Muslim world—seeking to engage Muslims with a commitment of mutual respect. No one can doubt his sincerity. From his first days in office, he has emphasized the importance of dialogue and engagement. A new chapter in relations between the United States and the world's Muslims.

But the aspirations will remain elusive without acknowledging the real fact that most Americans and Muslims continue to have misperceptions of Islam, and about the broad geographic and cultural diversity of Muslim cultures.

A majority of public opinion polls taken in the last four years show that the views of American and Muslim citizens are shaped by a handful of attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Washington Post/ABC News polls from 2006, for example, found that nearly half of Americans regard Islam "unfavorably," while one in five admit to prejudiced feelings toward Muslims.

Interactions of the Muslim world are covered by the conflict in the Middle East and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that US citizens have been engaged in. Because of the fact that most Muslims live in Asia. Or that the four countries with the largest Muslim populations—Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh—are all nations with no significant involvement in extending American foreign policy.

A 2002 report by the US State Department's Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy called for a new vision of cultural diplomacy that "can restore US national security to stable, wide-ranging and sustainable ways." In 2008, a bipartisan group of American leaders—the US Muslim Engagement Project—convened by Search for Common Ground and the Consensus Building Institute, issued a report calling for a new direction for US relations with the Muslim world. Recommendations in this effort would be "to improve mutual respect and understanding between Americans and Muslims and enhance cooperation on issues of common concern."

The efforts were peculiar to hand-written votes, not to machine-shaded ballots. That was good, for instance, in determining whether a ballot was written by one hand or two hands, but not in appreciating the voter's intent via the mere shading of pre-printed ballots.

**Bush vs Gore.** A similar question arose during the 2000 U.S. presidential election. The electoral votes at all 51 states—except Florida—showed Al Gore slightly ahead of George Bush. Under their automated system, Florida votes inflicted three choices "through ballots to be punched through a machine." Gore contested the result over a deliberate omission, but not been perforated for the machine to count them. In some cases, a piece of the ballot (a chad) was hanging by two corners. In other cases, there was no appreciation at all, just an indentation on the ballots. The Florida Supreme Court ordered a manual count for all the "undervotes."

Should these imperfectly punched ballots be manually counted? If so, Gore's victory would be settled, if not, Bush would win. To Gore's jubilation, the Florida Supreme Court decreed a manual count for all appeal. The U.S. Supreme Court, in Bush vs Gore (Dec. 12, 2000), reversed the verdict, holding that "the use of standard but manual recount violated the equal protection clause."

Despite widespread media hoarding and despite assuming the popular vote final and the electoral votes of Florida for Gore, I accept the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that the counting is the main solution for the world's only super power. On Dec. 8, 2000, during my watch as chief justice, Gore said via Time magazine it was from that decision to a national crisis would have imposed from the country. "The Supreme Court has spoken. Though I disagree with the decision, I feel a duty to respect and obey it," he calmly said.

History failed, but decided a similar electoral intervention never during our 2010 presidential elections, I wonder what it would happen. Be alert!

*Comments are welcome at chief.justice@pangalangan.blogspot.com*

# 'The Necklace' and other sad stories

AT LARGE

*Rina Jimenez-David*

THERE'S A SHORT STORY BY GUY DE MAUPASsant called "The Necklace" which tells the story of a woman who borrows a necklace from a friend, and ended up losing it. She and her husband had to spend half and finish that she has no "real" jewelry to wear. A wealthy friend loans her a necklace to wear to the ball, but when the humanity gets home, she finds to her great dismay that she has lost the necklace.

From here, the woman encounters her wealthy friend. Distressed by the woman's apparent woe, the friend inquires what happened. After hearing the story of the necklace, the friend confesses that the necklace was a fake.

In his short story, De Maupassant was writing not just of the perils of borrowing (and lending) pointy, but of aspiring beyond one's station in life, of sending a life for others to neither envy nor pity.

There's a story playing out—initially in the "society" pages only and in blind items, but now also in the halls of the Senate and in the front pages—that reminds us of the "The Necklace," but with a twist of the story, as well as the theme, is not limited to the rich.

On one hand, there are the women who "entrusted" pieces of jewelry to Mrs. Elena "Marilen" to Gutierrez or the understanding that she would re-sell the pieces at a profit. On the other, there is Marilen herself, who is reported to have been confused at the insistence of Mikee Morfe of Cojuangco, allegedly after suffering a nervous breakdown. Her husband meanwhile is reported to send out of the hospital after suffering a similar breakdown. According to the reports, the "little" drama, temperamental and philanthropic, who has already seized a substantial amount of jewelry entrusted to her to resell.

* * *

"I DON'T know why (the woman) insist on dragging my name into this," says Arroyo in a half-daring a hoax she feared for some media people "to clear my name."

While Estrada was closely associated with the last five many years, being a trusted and valued aide, Arroyo says she has left her political roots ago, saying she wanted a her stressful life because she was trying to get pregnant. (The Estrada couple is childless.)

But the source transacting with Gutierrez—and the one who has been quoted extensively by everyone for re-sale is her sister because of Marilen's "close association" with Arroyo. "She was always with Baby," says one who even traveled with Arroyo and Gutierrez to Bangkok and other foreign junkets of jewelry which she later gave to Estrada for selling.

In both sides told it, Estrada would accept the jewelry (and even inspected bags to one case) on consignment, issuing "guarantee checks" to serve as some sort of bond should she not in the process of selling the items. Once she sold the items, Estrada would take back the checks, pay the amount agreed upon and personally split the profits between them. Apparently, the transactions were moving smoothly until Gutierrez's checks bounced, prompting her to ask for some of the women met with Gutierrez's family to demand payment or the return of the jewelry she says Gutierrez's father refused to pay her back with painstaking claim receipts.

* * *

still this a where the story gets murky as expected. Instead of trying to sell the pieces, Gutierrez was rumored pawning them and even "selling" the claim receipts for below the value of the pieces she pawned/sold, and, of course, the real value of the jewelry.

This is what Sen. Loren Legarda, a close friend of some of the women involved, insisted in her privilege speech on the Senate floor, that there be a thorough with wrongdoers, and the need for closer state supervision of pawnshop operations.

"I don't know why she got into this," Arroyo says of her friend Marilen Gutierrez, she says, was a professor of political science is respected universities. "She's not a businesswoman. She has no education for buy-and-sell, much less for compliance of financial dealings. To vouch for Marilen's kind-hearted nature, Arroyo even had her talk to Dr. Mario Aristotle of the Holy Family rules belongs to a "community of women" who "help each other" in times of crisis, who said Marilen helped them greatly while they were battling their cancers in Germany, Cebu.

For another of Marilen's victims, who says it was only because of Marilen's eloquence in family that she was willing to entrust her jewelry to her, with her, points a different picture. "When my mothers was diagnosed with cancer, I told Marilen that I would no longer do business with her because I wanted to concentrate on helping my mother get well. But Marilen would not take no for an answer with many guises, saying I would better help with the medical expenses and that it was what I owed my uncle grandmother.

"She even went out a side of Baker Fix, saying it would help my mother get better. All the while, I was thinking that I was helping a friend. I don't know how anyone could be so devious."

* * *

MARILEN said her husband, as her own friends recall, knew—like the couple in "The Necklace"—that the jewelry they were pawning was borrowed. Others did the money goes to her as have the women, whose exact number remains unconfirmed, but valuable pieces of jewelry (heirlooms or not), even if perhaps they have not been given enough value.

It's one heck, it sounds like the story of a woman who got in over her head. Or the other, it sounds like the story of women who trusted in the bonds of their class, and found that these were fleeting and ephemeral. Perhaps it's both stories, both ending sadly.

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Please send feedback to jovenesto@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

# TALK of the TOWN

## BOAT BUILDING

# Keeping a Sama tradition alive

*[Editor's Note: A team of Sama carpenters has just finished building a balangay at the harbor side of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Pasay City, just a stone's throw from the Manila Yacht Club. Its design and shell-first construction were based on the balangay, a pre-colonial boat excavated in Butuan in 1978, and on the shipbuilding methods of the Sama of Tawi-Tawi, one of the two ethnic groups in the Philippines that have resisted their centuries-old boat-building tradition. A group called "Kaya ng Pinas" will use the balangay to trace the migration routes of the ancestors of Filipinos.]*

By Ma. Bernadette L. Abrera

A LONG TIME AGO WHEN THERE WERE no boats yet, a family lived on a river. One day, the son took a stroll along the shore and failed to return home. His parents searched for him in vain and instead found at the water's edge a piece of log, which had not been there before.

### Who are the Sama?

THE SAMA IS AN ETHNOLINGUISTIC group traditionally found in Tawi-Tawi and Sulu.

There are also Sama groups in Zamboanga del Sur, Cotabato, Davao, northern Palawan and Capiz (cited in Nimfa).

Outside of the Philippines, there are Sama found in northeastern Borneo, Indonesia and Malaysia and other parts of Indonesia. The Sama classify themselves as Sama Bihind (Sama of the sea or land), generally those who still roam about the waters, and Sama Dilaya or Dilawa (Sama of the land or dayo), those who have settled along the coast.

Outsiders have referred to them as Samal although they believe that this term is both colonial and, for their reactions, flame signifies group unity; the analogy they use for their origin is palok or fish eggs.

### Navigators

The livelihood of these Sama groups comes from the sea. They are artisanal-edged excellent shipbuilders and navigators.

A specialized group on Sibutu island is also highly organized as vessel-savers. The Sama are generally nocturnal, although most practice what may be known as fish hours.

Based on language, the Yakan, Jama Mapun and Sanjan are also Sama. Jama Mapun speaking groups are believed to have come to the Philippines around 800 AD in the area around Basilan island, and then travelled southward.

The Yakan are land dwellers residing primarily on Basilan island and their main economic products are from the land: coconuts, cacao, rice, abaca, sugarcane, rubber and cattle. They do not regard themselves as Moros. The Jama Mapun are found mainly on the island of Cagayan de Tawi-Tawi.

### Houseboats

There are also Sama Dilaya communities in Palawan and Borneo. The term Bajau was used by the Bruneian and Sulu traders from Sulawesi to refer to the Sama who live in houseboats or lepa.

The boat-building industry is found mainly in Sibutu island. Sanctuary is part of the municipality of Simunul in Tawi-Tawi.

Sibutu is some 20 miles southwest of Bongao, the capital of Tawi-Tawi. Some 25 miles farther, one would reach Borneo. Geologically, island is much smaller than Sibutu but it is the commercial center seat of Bongao.

Both Bongao and Simunul have non-coastal parts. The inside river that leads to Shanghai carves up the municipalities as well, with smaller islands lining the banks. Other members will share fish directly from the boats and the river is always busy with all sizes of boats coming in and leaving the area.

Sibutu is does not have a good port, being surrounded by coral reefs and sand bars. The island of Sibutu itself is a coral reef measuring 14.5 miles long and 2.25 miles wide. This geographic character makes Sibutu one of the best fishing grounds in the country. However, there is a very limited area for growing vegetables, of which coconut trees abound.

The staple fish and oysters (made from cassava), or rice which comes from Sabah. Fishing and boat building are the main economic activities.

Ma. Bernadette L. Abrera

They knew that this had been their son and they were overwhelmed with grief. The father prayed to God to deliver him from his anguish and turn him into something else. He became the wind. The mother, too, made the same prayer and she became the water. In this manner, the family was reunited.

This Sama folktale illustrates the group's deeply held belief in the intimate alliance between the wind and the wave to propel a boat to its destination. They regard the actions of the wind and the water as the parents' excuse on their child so that no harm would befall it, even in the midst of concerns and fear.

The depth of their knowledge of the natural relationship between the wind and the wave acting on the environment has made them masters of the sea, both as navigators and shipbuilders. They are also expert divers and are known to swim like fish.

### 'Kumpit'

The Sama of Sibutu island are noted for making kumpit, the large commercial boats that ply the Zamboanga-Tawi-Tawi-Sabah route. The kumpit also carry products, such as mangoes, copra, logs and wood to Visayan destinations, mainly Bacolod and Iloilo. This commercial boat evolved in the 1600s from the earlier traditional ceremonial boat, garay, which had two sails.

The earliest kumpit seen fitted with sails but motors began to be installed by the 1970s as the boats became longer and wider. There is a measure anywhere from 30- to 80-feet long and take about a year to construct, with a master builder (sadora tukang) and at least two assistants (tukang) working full time.

### Hull-first construction

The construction follows the same hull-first tradition that has been recorded in the history of Philippine shipbuilding, a practice found in Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands.

This traditional technique has been retained by the Sama of Tawi-Tawi and the Ivatans of Batanes, the two geopolitical ends of the islands, aided no doubt by their distance from the colonial centers.

A hull-first construction is unique since the planks (timbers) are fastened from the keel and the keel is then built without the ribs (gabi) to hold them together. When the hull is about 10 to 12 planks high, the ribs will then be placed. This is akin to putting in the frame after the boards are in place.

The rib frame, therefore, is not necessary to shape the hull or even to keep the planks in place but the ribs serve to reinforce the hull. Such rib is likewise distinct since it is taken from a tree that is naturally curved. Thus, the rib running from one side of the hull to the other is made from a single piece of curved wood.

For larger boats, strakes are added against but the ribs that form the base are always made from single pieces. In the traditional boat, as the planks are curved, small pieces are shaped to regular thickness and holes are bored through sideways.

These served as the base from where the ribs would be tied to the hull with rope. In the kumpit, the ribs are held in place by iron nails driven in from outside the hull. Over this the beams is placed a kuleon (kayo pasanga) as well as planks for transverse strengthening (ginit gasi) in the big get boats like the kumpit.

### Series of dowels

Construction of the boat without the frame means that the planks are strongly joined together. The planks are joined by a series of dowels called mandeluan. These are traditionally made of wood, but the commercial construction now makes use of iron pins.

Fastening the plank is a laborious process that takes about two hours from measuring, carving, boring the holes for the dowels and fitting the top to the bottom plank. Each plank is fastened with at least 10 dowels.

The dowelling, a heavy mallet made of hardwood, is used to hammer in the planks. It weighs around 10 kilos. Pairing and fastening three rows of planks fill a day's work.

This is where the skill of the industry (carpenter) comes in. It is he who determines the flare and curve of the hull depending on the required length of the boat. It is the tukang who shares off the sides of the keel so as not to compromise the width by which the hull will open.

There are no nails for measuring lengths and angles. He determines it through experience. The planks that will then be fastened are straight, but each one will have to curve and open up until the hull reaches its widest point, and then the hull is shaped upward until its desired height. In the traditional manner, each plank is carved and notched according to its place in the hull. A long and slow process that took as much as a week for each plank.

In the kumpit, boards are made to curve with the use of large wooden clamps (cipit), tightened by triangular pieces of wood. Caulking is done by another group contracted for this particular task.

A cord called jambo buton is threaded into the seams to close up the gaps, then coated with getpet, commercially produced sealant that is the mixture of the natural resin traditionally used for boats. The cord is placed twice while caulking is done three times to ensure that it is watertight. As the ship enters the water, the resin expands and the ship is secure.

### Less prone to keeling

The hull construction of the boat makes the ship more balanced and less prone to keeling. The Sama always repaints the boat as balanced. The reasoning is that an unbalanced boat, for example, the planks are rolled instead when those are not yet fastened on the boat. Once they have been put in place they are called pasangat, which always achieves a pair.

The first set of pasangat that is joined to the keel is called pasagpal, followed by the barus, then lalulla, until the tenth set, kumpit alot which the kuno will be fixed. These terms all refer to a pair of planks. It would be incontestable to construct a boat on one side first and then proceed with the other. The seams balances would be lost.

### Boat of prayer

The Sama continue to have rituals in laying the keel of the plank-built boat, as that is the foundation of the entire vessel.

A tukang always consults a sacred notebook called sasi or pustakan for all important activities, such as laying the keel or the foundation of a house, time of travel and launching a boat.

The 19th century Filipino hero Andrand Mamaniwili believed that the pustakan, where the divination of the day were represented by animals drawn on a circular chart, was a remnant of Hindu influence in the Philippines before the advent of either Islam or Christianity.

Carrying the keel and being it on a site is a ceremonial activity participated in by other boat builders, as with the final launching of the boat on the sea. Prayers accompany the laying of the keel to ask for the boat's good fortune.

There are prayers for the pesse and the gasa. During construction, the tukang likewise recites a prayer as he fastens a new plank, calling upon the name of God for assistance. There is a prayer for each stage of the construction and each part of the boat so that the entire ship is built in prayer.

Despite the sweeping changes in the process of boat building, what remains constant is the construction of the hull before the house and the use of the palok, an adze with a double-blade.

The palok is used to cut, plane, chisel and perform numerous tasks because the angle of the blade can be adjusted. As a Sama has grown up, he begins to learn to use the palok and assist in boat building.

### No blueprint

A medium-sized lunghe (boat) called lenpar can be made by a young man. To make a kumpit, he will assist in the construction of at least three ships before he can be a tukang himself. The knowledge is often passed on to family members learning on the job, as there are no blueprints or written guides. As a boat builder remarked, "The plan is in my head."

Likewise, there is no contract when a boat is ordered. The tukang simply asks for the boat size desired by the owner, the supply of planks and other materials, and a down payment. The wood is his honor and the boat will be completed as agreed upon.

After acing's work, he leaves his tools in the boat and nothing will be lost. A tukang does not borrow materials intended for another boat but instead drops something if his supplier has difficulty in bringing in the required planks. The matter as a boat builder is transferred in his role in the community where he is also regarded as a leader in civil and religious affairs.

### Peak

The 1970s saw the peak of the boat building industry in Sibutu, when as many as 70 boats were being constructed simultaneously. They made not only commercial boats but also yachts and private ships. Steel- or fiberglass boats have arrived.

The scouring of materials has also become more difficult as trees in Tawi-Tawi are no longer supply the needs of the industry. Logs are being brought in from Sabah without the necessary permits.

The boat building tradition of the Filipinos, retained by the Sama, is facing a rough sea of change ahead. The master builders need assistance to adapt to new technologies and to retain their skills. They need further support as they can finally reveal their indigenous knowledge of boat building and navigation. After all, they possess a precious ancient inheritance.

*Ma. Bernadette L. Abrera, a Ph.D., is an associate professor of history at the University of the Philippines Diliman.]*

"TUKANG" Baya Maskal hammers in a plank with a "bangkong" (mallet) while wood clamps keep it in place in Talisay on Sibutu island in Tawi-Tawi. Talisay is the Sama town for carpenters.

THE RIB frame ("gisik") is placed after the hull is built.

# Health Advisory

## Influenza A (H1N1) Response Level System in Schools

Issued by:
DOH Emergency Management Task Force for the Pandemic Response to Influenza A(H1N1)

| | RESPONSE LEVEL 1 | RESPONSE LEVEL 2 | RESPONSE LEVEL 3 | RESPONSE LEVEL 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CRITERIA | • Confirmed cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) in other countries but no confirmed case in the Philippines | • Confirmed cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) in the country<br>• No confirmed case in the school<br>• No confirmed community level transmission | • Confirmed cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) in the country<br>• Confirmed case in school<br>• No confirmed community level transmission | • Confirmed cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) in the country<br>• Confirmed community level transmission |
| RESPONSE | • Keep updated about the status and extent of novel influenza A (H1N1) globally<br>• Campaign for proper hand washing, general hygiene and cough/sneeze manners<br>• Make available hygiene and sanitation facilities<br>• Line list and monitor health status of students, faculty and non-teaching personnel who have history of travel to countries with reported confirmed cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection<br>• Observe precautionary measures during school gathering | • Level I Response PLUS:<br>• Influenza Like Illness (ILI) surveillance ( fever, cough or sore throat)<br>• Line list of students, faculty and non-teaching personnel with influenza-like illness<br>• Monitor trend, cases, status of absentees (students/faculty/non teaching personnel)<br>• Isolate in designated room and refer to the school clinic or to a health facility persons identified to have signs and symptoms of ILI while in the school<br>• Students/faculty/non-teaching personnel with signs and symptoms of ILI shall not report to school but inform the school physician/local health authorities for proper advice<br>• Establish referral system with health care facilities<br>• Report to Local Health Office (MHO/CHO) and/or regional DOH Center for Health Development | • Suspension of classes in the affected school(s)<br>• Report to Local Health Office (MHO/CHO) and/or regional DOH Center for Health Development | • Suspension of classes in the affected area(s)<br>• Report to Local Health Office (MHO/CHO) and/or regional DOH Center for Health Development |
| Declaration of Suspension of Classes | • No suspension of classes | • No suspension of classes | • If one school has confirmed positive case of novel influenza A (H1N1), the School Principal can declare the suspension of classes<br>• If two or more schools in one city or municipality have confirmed positive case of novel influenza A (H1N1), the Division Superintendent can declare the suspension of classes in the affected schools and adjacent areas, or depending on the local situation, in the entire city or municipality.<br>• The Higher Education Institution Heads can declare suspension of classes in their respective schools. | • If there is community level transmission in a city or municipality or several cities or municipalities, the Division Superintendent can declare the suspension of classes in the affected cities or municipalities; or depending on local situation, in the entire province<br>If there is community level transmission in two or more provinces, the Regional Director of DepEd/CHED/TESDA can declare the suspension of classes in the affected provinces; or, depending on local situation, in the entire region<br>The Higher Education Institution Heads can declare suspension of classes in their respective schools. |

- Confirmation of cases as well as community level transmission shall come from the Department of Health. The school administrator shall coordinate with DOH.
- The Secretary of DepEd/ Chairperson of CHED/Director General of TESDA can suspend classes at any stage depending on the information or recommendation provided by the DOH.

### Conditions when to lift the suspension

Schools may open 10 calendar days from the date of suspension of classes provided students, faculty, and non-teaching personnel with influenza-like symptoms or confirmed cases remain isolated at home or at designated health facilities.

**To-DOH Alerto Laban sa FLU!**

**Bantay Fever at Flu!**
Kung ikaw ay may alin man sa mga sintomas na nabanggit, kumonsulta agad sa doktor.
Para sa karagdagang kaalaman tumawag sa (02) 711-1001 o 711-1002
o bumisita sa http://www.doh.gov.ph/H1N1

INQUIRER Mindanao

Like Joe Bendijo
Jones Oval Mitra A. Alcantara

# When people unite to keep the peace

"They were bombing the village as if they were planting rice..."

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Thnl, South Cotabato

DARK NIGHTS WILL SOON BE OVER IN the upland village of Lanahomoc in Thlnl town in South Cotabato.

Lampposts flicking small beams now line the main road and will illuminate anytime the entire community of Moro and Thlnl people. A health center reopened to better provide basic medical assistance, church provisionally at the center, in front of a day-care facility that serves at least 40 children.

Lanahomoc, once a hotbed of Moro rebellion, struggles to survive in the midst of poverty, its many huts perched on the background and its efforts drenched in many stories, both told and untold.

Actors both, however, will make one appearance from the people's collective determination to rise each down-pressed, no matter the small steps, and let peace reign.

In the 1970s, the village had long been a battleground in Mindanao, having once hosted the Moro National Liberation Front's Camp Montanore. It is still rubble. Its tradition strikes though as suspicious protest that its people are sympathizers of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Behind Tuagan, tubbier of 2-year-5 at the Islamic Nationale MILF Rials, studied that he and his family found their way to Lanahomoc because of the armed conflict between the Habilians and Moros.

## Raga attack

One early morning in 1972, he said, his village of Lanahlgl was attacked by a Christian vigilante group called the Ilaga, killing more than a dozen Moro people and burning around 50 homes. Five of them killed were children and the rest were women and elderly.

His father, Tuagan, said, wandered to the upland like Lanapaak. During those an- il Lanahomoc's tilled banks invited his family to live with the larmal (indigenous people) in 1980.

In 1996, when then President Joseph Estrada declared an all-out war against the MILF, the village was bombed for three days, said Tuagan's younger brother, Iscoran, who is now a peace and development advocate (PBA).

All of the villagers were forced to abandon their homes, he said.

"They were bombing the village as if they were planting rice. The first bomb dropped, a few minutes away from another residence's house at about 10 in the evening, waking all of us around. We had to leave immediately; otherwise, we would all be killed," Iscoran said.

The earliest MILF camps dates back to Mindanao-wide to Bosnaysa Compact.

## Suspected rebels

Iscoran said the people no longer asked why they were being involved in the fight of the government, most against the MILF. "We know that they generalize us... all of us are MILF rebels," he said.

The residents only went back to their village when the government signed a final peace agreement in 1996.

That the village is vulnerable to conflict was upon proven when the government responded to the uprising of some MILF units (ostensibly after the botched signing of the memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MOA-AD) in 2008).

## Vulnerability

Rhimi Ginky chair of the MILF-Bangs, assessed: "We received information that we were again being targeted by the military when the conflict between the government and the MILF happened. The information indicated that the soldiers were seen in Banuagay Lambangay and moving toward here, ready to attack us."

"Immediately, we informed Chair Pres. about this and, again, he communicated with the militia and reminded them to prevent and [illegible] community of peace-loving Iscoran MILF combatants and their families," Ginky said.

Lanahomoc declared itself a Peace and Development Community (PDC) in 2006 through the assistance of the ACT for Peace and upon the endorsement of the provincial government.

To be able to go to their homes reclaimed four of being suspected as rebel supporters is one of the indications that the village is peaceful, according to Iscoran.

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Across the NATION

Author: Assistant Editor Tony Sorgoza

# DILG: Gov't on target vs NPA rebs

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT IS WELL within its target of defeating or significantly weakening the communist rebellion by the middle of next year, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said on Thursday.

Speaking at a press conference here after a meeting of the Regional Peace and Order Council of Western Visayas, Puno said the government has substantially reduced the number of rebel fronts from 180 last year to 64 this year.

He said these would be further halved by early next year.

He said the main approach of the government is the "deliberate use" of the counter insurgency drive by involving police and civilian authorities in the campaign.

This, he said, is contained in an executive order issued by then-ulous Macapagal-Arroyo, which reorganized and reoriented the peace and order councils.

Under Executive Order No. 739 issued in August last year, the peace and order councils were reorganized to ensure the convergence of efforts of civil authorities and agencies, police and military.

The order also provides for sanctions against local chief executives who are giving support to communist rebels. It also creates a regional bodies against rebels that are led by military personnel.

Puno said the involvement of the police and civilian officials and agencies in the regional bodies was not a reflection of rebel strength but a shift in the government's approach in the insurgency. Previously, the regional bodies were mainly left to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

He said the shift in approach was brought by the recognition that the 40-year-old insurgency, one of the world's longest armed conflict, would not be solved through military means alone but through a combination of social, economic, health and local development programs.

"We have adopted a more open arms policy toward the rebels," Puno said.

He said the DILG campaign is being complemented by livelihood and rehabilitation programs for rebels who give up their arms.

The President has directed the AFP to wipe out the rebellion before her term ends in June next year.

But the government has come under criticism from local and international human rights watch groups for the spate of killings and enforced disappearances of unarmed activists, rebels have been linked to the Arroyo's directive.

LEONCIO Pisan, one of the more prominent leaders of the communist New People's Army, with his men in their camp in the hinterlands of Davao.

## Soft drink firm workers plan strike vs layoffs

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Three unions of employees in the soft drinks maker Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) have filed notices of strike at the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) to stop alleged layoffs and union-busting, their leaders said.

The NCMB on Friday started hearing the cases filed by the unions of sales and manufacturing workers in the CCBPI plants in San Fernando City in Pampanga and Mercedes in Bulacan.

The hearings are held to amicably settle the labor dispute without bothering operations.

"The company represented it is giving up 618 workers from Bacolor to Hindi. It was redundancy to have one union members to cover only," said Nilvelo Villanueva, president of the San Fernando CCBPI Rank and File Union (Sinorfu).

The union public information officer Ronaldo Ramos said the company's decision to lay off workers would affect the operations of the plant.

Workers have been picketing the company's premises during off-duty hours since Monday to protest the early retirement.

At least 111 workers in the company's plant in Mercedes and 68 others in San Fernando "have availed of the early retirement program," according to company's notice filed with the Department of Labor and Employment on May 26.

The DOLE did not cite this as a case of permanent or temporary layoff.

Arnie Hanibi Cantos, CCBPI corporate communications manager, had said some personnel would be affected because of a "restructuring of its sales, delivery and commercial operations in the Luzon: Manila Area] and Luzon." Time/Dr Dogin, Inquirer Central Luzon

WET MARKET
Vendors and buyers bear with rains at what is left of the Baguio City public market that was burned recently. Shown in its repair and restoration have forced vendors to set up makeshift stalls.

## 30 West Visayas war veterans get payment

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—AT LEAST 30 veterans in Western Visayas have received compensation from the United States government's equity fund for Filipino World War II veterans.

Jesusita Pedrosa, Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) Western Visayas director, said the compensation was sent to bank accounts of the veterans or through checks delivered by courier.

The first payment was released on April 17 amounting to a one-time compensation of $9,000, for Filipino citizen veterans, or $15,000, for veterans who are US citizens. Those who received the payment were mostly from Iloilo and Antique provinces.

The compensation was mandated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, a new US law which provides for the official recognition of services rendered by Filipino World War II veterans to the US government.

Pedrosa said some 3,000 veterans in the region had applied for compensation since February this year, but she said at least 25 of those who applied for the equitable have died, some just days after they signed their application forms.

The families of those who applied but died will still receive the compensation after submitting required documents like death certificates of the veterans, marriage certificate of the surviving spouse and birth certificates of children, she said.

Thousands of aging World War II veterans have lined up and continue to queue for the benefits, but dozens are dying as they await for their payments.

The new US law thus recognized Filipino war veterans' role in World War II came decades after American lawmakers sympathetic to the Filipinos' struggle for recognition struggled to have legislators passed official-by honoring Filipino comrades-in-arms in the west.

But some veterans said the new law may have come too late as many of them are dying of old age or sickness.

A BACOLOD war veteran attends the celebration of the city's liberation from the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II. Hundreds of war veterans like him nationwide are awaiting benefits due them from the US government.

COA RULES VS TAYABAS GENEROSITY

## ₱132,000 bonus recipients losing sleep

LUCENA CITY—THREE MONTHS AFTER local government employees here received a ₱132,000 bonus each, the prospect of returning the amount to government collect a now causing the workers sleepless nights.

"Thinking that the amount was really a generous bonus, many of it had already been spent," said an employee Friday. He requested that he not be identified to city workers' union on orders not to talk to media.

"With the prospect of returning it through salary deductions, what will be left of my monthly salary? My wife is now finding it hard to sleep."

"We are under strict orders by local officials not to speak to the media," a female employee said.

### Discrepancy

The employees said that if they would be forced to return the bonuses given to them, they will only receive ₱82,000.

"Because that's the amount that we actually received," said the workers.

Last February, 151 permanent city employees each signed vouchers listing the amount of ₱132,000 due them under the so-called "Collective Negotiation Agreement" (CNA) incentive.

The fund purportedly came from the 50 percent savings of the local government's MOOE (maintenance and other operating expenses).

However, most employees said they only received ₱82,000 even if the payroll slip that they signed showed they got ₱132,000.

Five city councilors—Ninfa de Torres, Jorgie Caoghay, Emilia Nograles, Lilibeth Calonge and Nicodemus Alcaraz—had asked the Commission on Audit to investigate the legality of the generous incentives authorized by Tayabas Mayor Francisco Ahang.

The COA, through its Notice of Disallowance dated March 6, 2009, cited several legal grounds that nullified the incentives.

### Return the money

It ordered Ahang and Tayabas City accountant Carina Arbuscia to direct all recipients of the bonuses to deal with the disallowance and pay back the money to government.

Failure to do so, the COA said, will compel the audit agency to enforce sanctions.

On April 21, the five councilors also charged Ahang and nine other local government officials with gross abuse of authority and other violations at the Ombudsman for Luzon.

Two local finance officials are seen disowning themselves from the fund mess.

Tayabas City treasurer Reynaldo Andola and Arbuscia, in two separate affidavits obtained by the Inquirer, claimed that they were only pressured and forced to sign the documents releasing ₱1.9 million for the bonuses.

Arbuscia said she issued her affidavit in her "sincere attempt to mitigate" her involvement or participation in the transaction.

### Cannot be reached

Andola said he executed the affidavit to "relieve myself of liability" as an accountable officer of the local government "for what I believed was an illegal or improper use or application of government funds."

He also confessed that he only received ₱82,000, "which I learned was in accordance with the instructions given by City Mayor Beatrice Ahang."

Arbuscia said he was willing to return the ₱82,000.

Several times, the sources called Ahang through his mobile phone to get his side but the calls were not entertained and sometimes cut by busy tones.

In 2008, Tayabas government workers also received a similar bonus amounting to ₱59,000 each, which prompted the office of the provincial auditor to issue a notice of suspension of payment and ask the local government to justify the disbursement.

Belle T. Mollet, Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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# A haven, a hotline for abused women

## Crisis center gets boost from beauty firm

BALAYON, head of WCC

By Alison W. Lopez

LIKE BREAST CANCER, abuses against women in the Philippines are as rampant and as deadly if left undetected.

"There are a lot of kinds of abuses—from the physical, emotional and even financial. But some of these abuses, they (women) don't recognize as such. Because of the (they simply endure the pain)," said Women's Crisis Center (WCC) director Theresa Balayon.

The center noted here, though, is "intimate-partner violence"—or abuse among married or somewhat married couples—based on the average 8-10 calls received by WCC's lifeline (tel. 9225335 and 9287744).

"Among the cases, the most common is battery. The profiles or statistics on reported cases are misleading because by one reported case there must be 8 or 14 more," added Balayon.

It's crushing to hear that at this age and time, women—rich or poor, successful or jobless, Filipino or foreigner—still fall victim to various abuses like rape, incest, prostitution, trafficking, and, more recently, vanishing exposure to pornography.

But if there's any good news, it is that the center was the first to be awarded about P700,000 in funds raised by Avon for its latest campaign, "Speak Out Against Domestic Violence."

The beauty company which has undertaken aggressive steps against breast cancer, has added this advocacy to its cup to support awareness, education, prevention, and direct service programs against domestic violence.

### Close to heart

"Avon, as a company for women, has been very keen on choosing causes that enables and empowers women to speak out. The crusade is close to our hearts, especially since it is an issue that continues to affect a lot of women and their families," said Bob Hutchin, Avon Philippines president and general manager.

The money from the sale of the "empowerment necklace" and Avon lotions will be used to extend WCC's helplines for four more hours daily—even on weekends—starting this month.

"We will also train Avon sales reps how to respond as a woman to crisis, for us to ensure the humanity that has been lost to violence," said Balayon.

She warned that oftentimes, victims cower psychologically before it manifests to the physical through extreme or verbal abuse.

"Pareng pag hindi ka mahal as tao, mamaltratuhin ka. Of hindu can't stop you, you'll be abused verbally. There's also financial abuse. Hindi ka bibigyan ng equal para sa mga pangangailangan (You won't be given enough money for your needs). So by the time it reaches the physical, siguro na ang self-esteem mo (your self-esteem would be at its lowest)," she said.

Assistant Garcia, coordinator of crisis intervention counseling program, recalled the case of a pregnant housewife who went to the center after her jealous husband poured a pot of hot water on her.

The woman, who was carrying their third child, showed the gun his wife with no body hurt with nine chips embedded on her thigh.

"Seventy, I talked to her. Through our conversation, the man changed for a while and did not beat her up anymore, but the emotional abuses were still there. Maybe it was God's will that the man died later on," Garcia said.

But even well-educated women are not exempted from violence—like that of a female judge, whose lawyer-husband personally battered her, until he finally dragged her out in the street during a nasty fight.

"The husband has a tendency of putting her down. She knows herself, she's really smart. But the guy is overdrinking her mind on small silly matters (that she's not good)," said the counselor.

### Value self first

To prevent such abusive situations, Garcia said it was important for women to value themselves first and to all first their rights as an individual.

"How should a woman look at herself? My advice to women is they have to be very keen with what's going on in the relationship. If you've observed that you're being controlled, you have to be very open to discuss it with the person. You don't have to separate immediately," she said.

"There should be respect and care for each other. When you start to feel these things are not present anymore, deal with it. Don't put it aside," stressed the psychologist.

Donations in cash and kind are welcome at the Women's Crisis Center, which is located on the 3/F, SR Tanyag extension annex building of the East Avenue Medical Center in Diliman, Quezon City.

ANAMABEL Garcia (left), one of WCC's counselors, listens to the story of a victim.

A STAFF MEMBER answers calls in the center's hotline.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2008
GLOBAL Pinoy
Editor Gerry Lirio

"WE MAKE TO BE REALISTIC. We don't have jobs for them here. But we have to use it. That we take care of their needs while overseas."
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E-mail us at global_pinoy@inquirer.com.ph

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

# Not Down Under or Big Apple but in Manila where she belongs

By Mike Hamlin

HOME IS WHERE THE heart is for this up-and-coming Fil-Australian actress.

And no matter how long she has been away, Poly Irvine, 21, always feels that "sense of belonging" whenever she comes into Manila.

"It's really hard to explain," she said in an interview with The Inquirer. "Sure, I didn't grow up here, but every time I come back, I feel the sense of belonging."

Coming over to Manila for the second time, Poly is part of the new cast of the popular Australian children's educational programme "Hi-5," now on its 13th season (and Down Under). The cast held small shows in Metro Manila in mid-May, part of the promotional tour to kick off the program's new season.

Season 12 of "Hi-5," which airs Monday on Nickelodeon, is somewhat momentous for the show with four new cast members, including Poly, joining the program. The past shows of "Hi-5" saw another Filipino, Kathleen de Leon Arora, perform since its initial run in 1999).

In 2006, Kathleen left the show after eight seasons to focus on raising one of her family.

## Miss Saigon understudy

Prior to her "Hi-5" stint, Poly began her career pursuing parts on stage and television. She was an understudy for the Kim role in the Australian run of "Miss Saigon" in 2007. It was headlined by Filipinos Lea Salonga and Lauren Cuenca, whose performance

> "When I went to New York for the first time, I had a culture shock. But when I came to the Philippines, it felt like I never left"

earned her an acting award.

"I roomed Anastacia Tarife (Miss Saigon's then understudy) for 14 months," she said. "Then I decided to focus on my acting career so I studied in Sydney." ("Tarife Lauren Scenic, my agent said there was an audition for Hi-5, and asked me if I wanted to try? I said sure and it went'long, long hang, from there on."

The experience was amazing, Poly beamed.

"I was only 17 when I started and I finished when I was 18, so I kinda grew up with the character," she said. "As a performer, I learned so much and I had the opportunity to work with so many amazing people like Lea Salonga and PJ Rosales."

## Distinguished alumni

Determined to enhance her skills after "Miss Saigon," Poly flew to the Big Apple to study at the Atlantic Acting School, put up in 1983 by Jimmy award-winning actor William H. Macy and acclaimed playwright David Mamet.

The school's distinguished alumni include Jessica Alba of the fantastic Four series and Felicity Huffman, Macy's wife, of the popular television show Desperate Housewives.

"When I came to New York for the first time, I had a complete culture shock," she said. "I was like, 'it was a whole new world I've never seen before."

In contrast, Poly explained that when she came to the Philippines, she felt as if she never left.

"I feel that it's not forced," she said of staying here and liking her surroundings. "I'm so happy to be around such beautiful people."

Poly first came here in 2006 for a variety and three years after, she said nothing much has changed.

"I love everything about here—the people, the feel of the air on my skin," she said. "I love everything about this country. I'm glad I'm here again."

## Never stop learning

With a tight schedule of at least three taping days on top of promotional tours and publicity blitz, Poly had to hang off further acting workshops and training. But if there's an opportunity, she said she'd definitely take it.

"I think learning is something that you should never stop doing," she said. "There's no mode, so much to learn as a performer and as a human being. Definitely, I will continue to study when I can, if I could fit it in."

Beaming like she's on top of the world, Poly described her career as "good...so far" and it's "on track." She enjoyed the Manila leg of the "Hi-5" tour, particularly because the children who watched them, she said, were "so amazing" and "full of joy and it's contagious."

She couldn't ask for more, she said, because she finds her work fun and exciting, although work commitments will result in her because of the high-energy levels she has to give out.

"Given my job, I have the fact that I get to play and sing," she said. "Of course, it's difficult to start the day, giving all you can and you go home, sleep and do it all over again for the next day."

But then again, when she sees a throng of excited children waiting for their performance, she wouldn't get a hoot from that, she said.

## Work is fun

"It's hard not to be that way when you're in front of the kids who are smiling, jumping when they see you," she said, referring to their performance-level sets. "I want to give them all."

("Besides) I barely call it work because it's fun and I'm doing everything that I love," she said. "I feel that this is not work at all. I'm just having so much fun."

Even Kathleen told her that working for "Hi-5" is a bonus, Poly said.

"(Kathleen) told me 'you're gonna have so much fun,'" she said.

Poly just turned one when her parents decided to settle in Australia. Her recollection of her stay in Manila and Davao, where her mother hails from, is faint but she said her mother never failed to teach her Filipino values.

"I'm very much half half, because of

IS SHE Australian or Filipina? Half half, says 21-year-old Poly Irvine, a rising star on Australian TV's "Hi-5" dropping to make it in Broadway, like her idol, Lea Salonga. Her mother hails from Davao.
PHOTOS BY MIL HAMLIN

food interest to desserts, concerning a fact which is relevant in applicant's entitlement or reason for immigration benefit.

She made a green card by marrying her actual marital status. She relied on a bad advice that she needed be side-by-status by her husband and petition her eventually. This is a common error made by many applicants for immigrant visas, which a costs unpalatable. There are some applicants who managed to get their green card by that, it is generally unwise that the fraud will not be discovered later.

## Remedy

There is a remedy which is called the "waiver." If granted by the immigration examiner or immigration judge, the waiver will serve to forgive the fraud. However, this does not come easy. There are eligibility requirements that must be proven to include "extreme hardship" in qualifying US citizen relatives.

Extreme hardship is not a definable term of fixed meaning and its elements depend on the facts of each particular case. The adjudicator applies discretion in exercising his discretion. It becomes necessary that the application be supported by substantial documents to make it approvable.

Considering the hassle of fees on the visa applicant if the fraud is detected, it behooves every prospective applicant for a visa to avoid engaging in fraud, but he is ready to suffer its severe consequences. Just like other crimes, fraud does not pay.

GIVE ME FIVE Poly Irvine (second from right) with Australian Embassy friends and "Hi-5" co-stars, from left, Lauren Brant, Stasia Mcristaver, Australian Embassy Minister Stephen Scott, his wife Cheryl Wong and their daughter Lotus, Casey Burgess, and Kevin Mitchener. "Hi-5", an educational children's program in Australia, screens in over 220 countries, reaching an average of 1 million children per week.

# Fraud does not pay

IMFO
*Lourdes Santos Francisco*

THE US CONSULAR OFFICE in Manila is considered one of the most vulnerable posts for fraud. So, a separate unit for fraud detection exists. Obviously, the purpose is to prevent applicants who contrived fraud from getting US visas.

Considering the heightened enforcement measures of the Department of Homeland Security, even green card holders are put in reverse/deportation proceedings because of fraud made in their applications for visas. There is no statute of limitation in prosecuting those who submitted fraudulent immigration applications. Despite the lengthy passage of time, green card holders may still be held accountable for their fraud or misrepresentations.

Rita was petitioned by her permanent resident mother in 1982. At the time the petition was filed, Rita was single. In 1988, she married her longtime boyfriend Jun. They had two sons born during the marriage. Rita was told by the judge who solemnized the marriage that the certificate of marriage should not be registered until their 6 should remain a secret.

In 1993, Rita was called for an interview for immigrant visa. She declared her sons but maintained in their birth certificates that she was a single mother. They were able to immigrate to the US.

## Discovered

One month after, Rita went to the Philippines to marry Jun anew. She registered this marriage and upon her return to the US, she filed for a petition for Jun. Since she is a green card holder, her petition fell under the preference category. After extensive questioning, Jun's application for immigrant visa was denied.

The reason for the denial? She's first marriage in 1988 was discovered. Jun was told that Rita was not supposed to exercise her green card and so may not confer immigration benefit by petitioning him.

Jun and Rita have been separated for more than 10 years now. Rita was afraid to go back to Manila for fear that her green card would be revoked at the Post of Entry. Because of the separation, Rita was left to take care of her teenage sons. Unfortunately, her sons became convicted felons for illegal drug use in the US. To add to her hardship, Rita is now in removal/deportation proceedings for committing fraud and misrepresentation in obtaining her green card. Her case is still pending.

Meanwhile, Jun found a new lover and is living in Manila with his second family.

## Misrepresentation

There are many grounds for denial of admission in the US. One of these is fraud and misrepresentation. Fraud is be a basis for denial of visa requires false representation with knowledge of its falsity, with intent to deceive an immigration officer.

Misrepresentation, on the other hand, does not require actual intent to deceive, concerning a fact which is relevant to applicant's entitlement or reason for immigration benefit.

She made a green card by marrying her actual marital status. She relied on a bad advice that she needed be side-by-status by her husband and petition her eventually. This is a common error made by many applicants for immigrant visas, which a costs unpalatable. There are some applicants who managed to get their green card by that, it is generally unwise that the fraud will not be discovered later.

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4057177.

# The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Querol

## US job losses ease; leaders say worst past

NEW YORK/LONDON—US employers lost much of the fewest jobs since September 2008 in May, a sharp deceleration that helped push the stock market higher on Friday as investors saw signs the economy may be on the mend.

Data showing US nonfarm payrolls fell by 345,000 in May came amid upbeat signals from the International Monetary Fund and the Bank of Japan.

The fall in US jobs was far less than the expected 520,000 drop and the revised 504,000 reduction in April.

"The light at the end of the tunnel just got a lot brighter," said Nigel Gault, chief US economist at IHS Global Insight in Lexington, Massachusetts. "May's employment report brings clear evidence that the labor market is beginning to stabilize."

Tempering the optimism, however, the US unemployment rate rose to 9.4 percent—the highest since July 1983—due to the job cuts and a surge in new labor force entrants.

US stocks closed slightly higher after a choppy day of trading. The Dow Jones Industrials average was supported by Wal-Mart Stores Inc.'s new $15-billion stock buyback program.

European stocks finished higher.

Even before the data, policymakers held out hope for the world economy.

"The global economy has not hit bottom yet, but the worst of the slowdown is over," the International Monetary Fund's first deputy managing director, John Lipsky, said in Russia. Reuters

# Prime Minister Brown 'dead man walking,' says UK press

LONDON—BRITAIN'S NEWSPAPERS SAID ON Saturday that Gordon Brown's premiership was fatally scuppered and called for a general election to restore some authority in the government.

A dollar blown vessel to rough it out as prime ministers and Cabinet members quit in bitter environments and his government's Labour Party suffered crushing meltdown.

Newspaper editorials aided through the wreckage and said Brown was badly wounded in the fight to save his job.

"Gordon Brown is like a wounded bull ... proud, defiant and doomed," pronounced the Mailon three deep within his shoulder blades," said The Sun.

"For all the chic labels of a 'dead man walking,' he is still walking."

The tabloid said Brown's unwillingness to rally his new Cabinet and get them working rather than plotting over the coming months before they pushing his leadership "propels us to the void" later than years.

The Financial Times said Brown had run out on the prime ministership.

"At the end of the storm week in his political life, Gordon Brown is still standing—just. The question is whether he can still govern," the broadsheet said.

"He has failed to reassert his authority in the Cabinet reshuffle. He faces humiliation in the European elections. He should show he commands a clear majority in his party or step down and draw the way for a general election."

Of the reshuffle, The Times said "the rawest technical term was a suicide pact... an exercise in intervention management."

It was a hasty exercise that doomed the government was "paralyzed, with a weak prime minister presiding over a Cabinet that has declared to throw say mad."

Even the staunchly Labour-supporting Daily Mirror said: "Forces has a responsibility to decide if he is to continue views that Labour is on their side and worth voting for."

The tabloid's "mischief of expediency and was not the radical surgery we had expected and the country deserved."

The Daily Mail said Brown was now "a deeply compromised figure who will have been severely wounded."

"Yes, we need a general election, sooner rather than later, to cleanse parliament and give a proper mandate for ministerial action, which this government so manifestly lacks.

"But the last thing Britain needs now is a second unelected Labour prime minister to pour treasure."

The Independent also said the need for an election was "overwhelming."

The Daily Telegraph said Brown had "lost his authority and any sense of purpose," while Cabinet ministers have been "nothing short of a disgrace" in preventing their careers.

"The country has had enough of him... the Cabinet should have resorted against Mr. Brown and precipitated the general election that the country wants." AFP

## Ex-US State Dep't analyst, wife charged as Cuba spies

WASHINGTON—THE JUSTICE Department charged on Friday that a former State Department analyst and his wife worked as spies for Cuba for nearly 20 years, using a short-wave radio to pass secret diplomatic information to their Cuban handlers.

Officials said the couple, Walter K. Myers, 72, and Gwendolyn S. Myers, 71, received little in the way of compensation from the Cuban except for the short-wave radio and some travel expenses. Rather, the officials said, the couple appears to have been driven by duty among affinity for Cuba and their bitterness toward "American imperialism."

"We think they did it because they love Cuba," said a law enforcement official.

The Myerses, who live in Washington, were arrested on Thursday and charged in a grand jury indictment with serving as illegal agents of the Cuban government and wire fraud.

The case had been under investigation for three years but its unsealing two months ago, when an undercover agent of the FBI, posing as a Cuban agent, approached Myers. That led to a series of meetings in which Myers and his wife made incriminating admissions about their decades-long work for Cuba. NYT

## Nuke sub joins frustrating search for crash debris

RECIFE, BRAZIL—AN INTENSIVE sea operation to find the remains of an Air France jet that plunged into the Atlantic this week was being bolstered when a ship of maritime monitoring, officials said on Friday.

A French nuclear submarine was on its way to the area, 1,000 kilometers off Brazil's northeast coast, to help look for the black boxes from flight AF 447 which was lost Monday as it flew from Rio de Janeiro to Paris with 228 people on board.

Two more Brazilian navy vessels late Friday were also to join three others already in the area, which was being overflown by 12 Brazilian and French aircraft.

The head of air traffic control for the area, Brazilian Brig. Ramon Cardoso, told reporters "we have not made any recovery of material."

But the navy spotted floating in the vicinity were "not relevant," he said, adding that weather conditions were terrible, limiting visibility and recovery had changed direction.

Brazilian officials said bone picked up on Thursday turned out on closer inspection to be from a marine chan lizard, probably from algae.

But positive sightings in the waters of a seat from a plane and rubber and other components on Tuesday and Wednesday convinced southern then were in the right area.

Cardoso said these objects might have since sunk to the bottom of the ocean, where the plane's black boxes are also believed to be.

Search chars from the wreckage in the area in the black boxes, speculation climbed over what caused the accident.

French Defense Minister Herve Morin told reporters in Paris he had not ruled out a terror attack on the plane, although he had not heard of any claims or claims of responsibility being made.

French Transport Minister Dominique Bussereau said "we must do everything we can to find the flight recorders" but admitted "time is against us."

Plane-maker Airbus had issued a senior warning owners on its aircraft worldwide what to do when speed indicators give conflicting readouts, suggesting that pilots in such shorts were by the ill-fated Air France plane shortly before it met its end.

According to David Learmont, editor in chief of Flight International, the decision to issue the warning does not mean that investigators know what happened, but that they had seen enough to point to a possible problem.

"What Airbus is saying is, 'Whatever happened in these pitot, they didn't manage to handle it. We don't know everything that they faced but we know a little bit about the nature of the situation they faced,'" he said. AFP

## WORLDBRIEFS

### Berlusconi vows lawsuit over topless photos

ROME—Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said on Friday pictures of topless women and a naked man something of his wife were "tendentious," but his lawyer vowed to sue a Spanish newspaper that published them.

Earlier Berlusconi's attorney threatened legal action against El País, the most Czech prime minister Mirek Topolanek admitted that he was the man in the photo but charged that it had been doctored. The explosive pictures were published on the eve of European Parliament elections in Italy, which could new senses as a test on the scandal's impact on Berlusconi's popularity. But the Italian leader, already engulfed in scandals over his wife's decision to divorce him and his links to an aspiring teenage model, insisted that the photos were "innocent." "The published pictures were among hundreds of photos that had been snapped by Italian authorities after the prime minister's compliant to block their release, claiming they violated his right to privacy. "It's just not right for someone a kilometer away to interfere and start taking photos... The right to a private life must have greater protection when important guests are present," Berlusconi said. AFP

### Thai police: Carradine death may be accidental

BANGKOK—Masters remained on Friday over the death of American cult actor David Carradine, best known for the 1970s TV series "Kung Fu" and whose naked body was found in a hotel closet in the Thai capital. Police initially suspected suicide but now believe he may have died from accidental suffocation after finding a rope tied to his neck and genitals. The circumstances of his death have set gossipmongers working overtime, speculating that the 72-year-old actor may have been engaged in a dangerous form of sex play known as auto-erotic asphyxiation. The practice involves temporarily cutting off the supply of oxygen to the brain to heighten the effects of a sexual climax. AP

### Up to 36 reported killed in Amazon land protest

LIMA, Peru—Indians protesting government moves to develop oil, gas and other resources on their lands battled police in Peru's Amazon on Friday, with authorities and Indian leaders separately reporting 11 police and 25 protesters deaths. Accounts of the clashes and death totals varied widely, as no independent journalists appeared to be present on the remote jungle highway in the northern province of Bagua that echoes the fighting took place. But the political violence was Peru's worst in years and augured ill for President Alan García, who has championed development of the Andean nation's natural resources despite the objections of indigenous groups. AP

### 29 children killed in fire at daycare in Mexico

MEXICO CITY—Flames engulfed a daycare center in the northern Mexican city of Hermosillo on Friday, killing at least 29 children and injuring dozens as neighbors and firefighters ran through their smoke-filled playgrounds to save those who could. The fire apparently started at a six and the blaze Friday afternoon and spread to the 400 daycare center in the city of Hermosillo, said Jose Lamarque, a spokesperson for Sonora State Investigators. There were about 150 children in the daycare at the time. Lamarque said the fire was controlled within two hours and that most children died of asphyxiation. AP

### Landslide in Chinese mining region buries 78

BEIJING—Rescuers searched for 78 missing people on Saturday after a landslide buried as many as one and several homes in a valley in southwestern China. Seven people were rescued, three of them seriously injured, said an official with the propaganda office in the city of Chongqing. More than 500 rescuers looked for the dozens of missing, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

## 38 killed in mosque bombing in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—Several gunmen wrote on Saturday killed 38 people, a mosque in northwest Pakistan after a suicide bomber killed 30 people, heightening fears of a rebel backlash to an offensive to eliminate the Taliban.

The attack happened during prayers in a remote, conservative village in Upper Dir, which borders the district of Swat, where the military launched a renewed ground assault against the Taliban.

Friday's bombing comes after a series of similar blasts on civilian targets in retaliation for the offensive in Swat, which was launched in late April and would appear to have the rebels on the run.

"The rule in Swat has decisively turned. Major population centers and roads leading to the valley have been largely cleared of organized resistance by the government," Army chief Gen. Ashfaq Kayani was quoted saying in a statement.

Claims from other side and reports of death tolls are difficult to verify. AFP

## Medical Adherence: The Heart of the Problem

Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD) ranks as the top killer among the modern diseases of man. Unfortunately many ignore its subtle signs or risk factors which, when left, desapatite primary manner may decrease the threat significantly. Equally important is the adherence to specific medical regimens prescribed by their doctors will ensure a long and productive life.

As defined by the World's Health Organization, CVDs are medical conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels (heart attacks), cerebrovascular disease, raised blood pressure (hypertension), peripheral artery diseases, and heart failure.

Among the list of CVDs, hypertension is one of the most prevalent. It affects approximately 65 million individuals in the United States and approximately 1 billion worldwide. In the Philippines, there is a 17.4% prevalence rate among adult Filipinos (WHASS, 2004). The Bineo indicates that there is high consumer demand in the sodium content that carry blood from the pumping heart to all the tissues and organs of the body (maintenance cells).

Hypertension is more of the less asymptomatic and if left uncontrolled, may lead to heart attack, heart failure and/or kidney. It is sometimes regarded as a "silent killer," because people with dangerously high blood pressure may not feel any bad effects or warning signals before a major complication sets in.

According to the official website of the Philippine Department of Health (DOH), those who are at risk of having hypertension are smokers, people who have more than 20% of their ideal body weight (obesity), those who do not exercise regularly, those who prefer high salt and fatty foods, those who take excessive alcohol, people who are constantly under a lot of stress, potentially those who have diabetes and whose cholesterol level is excessive, those with current heart disease or kidney disease, and people who previously had stroke or heart attack. Apart from these, there is a strong family history of stroke or heart attack, there is a higher chance of having hypertension.

If left uncontrolled, hypertension may eventually lead to the following severe complications: heart attack, heart failure, stroke, renal failure that might require dialysis, blindness and painful walking due to narrowing of blood vessels in the lower legs.

That is why doctors highly require hypertensive patients to strictly adhere to their prescriptions, as it is vital in improving their condition.

### Medical Adherence

As defined by the Encyclopedia of Public Health (posted at answer.com), "adherence to medical recommendations is the extent to which a person's behavior coincides with medical or health advice, such as taking medication regularly, following a doctor's advice for a healthful diet, keeping appointments, and observing preventive and healthful lifestyle changes." Adherence in all these is key to proper health management.

Unfortunately, many patients still fail to comply completely with medical advice. In fact, most researchers agree that at least half of all patients do not take their prescribed drugs correctly and it is not primarily because of the cost of medicines. But because of lack of understanding about a patient's disease. Based on the Joint National Committee Report on Hypertension, deaths and complications due to hypertension occur due to lack of adherence or compliance to medication despite the availability of affordable and high quality medicines. This is a result of many factors which include poor communication between the health care providers (doctors and patients that prohibit better understanding of how to manage one's disease.

Failure to obtain the proper medication and modification of diet and lifestyle, especially prolonged treatment by patients because of the fact that this is an asymptomatic condition. Hence, there is indeed a need for further patient education to enable them to become more aware about this disease and there as a result, adhere to medical prescriptions. More importantly, there is a need to provide a maintenance medication, he must comply with the medical regimen that is prescribed by the doctor since for CV conditions, the prescription it is take a lifetime drug.

The five most common signs of non-adherence with medication, are: 1) failing to have a prescription filled; 2) taking an incomplete dose; 3) taking the medication at the wrong time; 4) forgetting to take one or more medications; and 5) misprogramming medication.

Pfizer, the country's leading research-based pharmaceutical company, has been long acknowledged for its expertise in the cardiovascular category, including pain management, anti-infectives, ophthalmology and oncology. Its amlodipine besylate products, prescribed to hypertensive patients, is a long-acting calcium channel blocker that blocks the entry of calcium into the muscle cells of the heart and the blood vessels, leading to heart muscle and vessel relaxation and eventual lowering of blood pressure within. Its long duration of action ensures good blood pressure control for at least 24 hours with just one tablet a day.

As the leader in the industry, Pfizer's principle investigating proper health care is not simply limited to access to effective and high quality medicines, but also to comprehensive data. Six years ago, the company launched its Patient Care Program, a partnership program with doctors that enables patients to understand their diseases and the proper way of managing it. Through this program, patients are provided with simple references to make them understand their health challenges with follow-ups for continuous adherence to their doctor advice. For CV patients prescribed with amlodipine besylate, the number of managing the disease is eased with educational materials that promote compliance to medication and healthy habits. This holistic approach has benefitted more than 1.5 million patients nationwide to date.

Based on a study conducted by Pfizer, hypertensive and hypercholesterolemic patients who received both discounts and health management intervention in the form of disease/medication information and constant reminders, have medication adherence rates of more than 80%, as opposed to those patients who received only discounts. This proves that understanding the condition allows the patient to take charge of his/her health.

Pfizer's dedication in helping patients live better and healthier lives continues not only with discovery and advancement of cures for diseases. Its constant innovation on how to reach the patients is also a reflection of the company's genuine commitment to offer hope and reason for people to live life to the fullest.

# SALAMAT SA UMENTO!

On behalf of the 1.3 million civil servants and their families, we thank President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, House Speaker Prospero C. Nograles, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Edgardo J. Angara, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Junie E. Cua, and other Senators and Congressmen for their resolute steps to enhance the compensation of public officials and employees under the third phase of the Salary Standardization Law.

We look forward to the Executive Order implementing the new salary levels for national government agencies starting July 2009, with funding of P18.4 billion provided for in the General Appropriations Act of 2009 for the first round of increases. Initial implementation in local government units shall take effect in January 2010.

**Basic Monthly Salary Levels To Be Fully Implemented in 2012**

| Salary Grade | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 | Step 4 | Step 5 | Step 6 | Step 7 | Step 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 9,000 | 9,088 | 9,181 | 9,273 | 9,366 | 9,459 | 9,554 | 9,649 |
| 2 | 9,675 | 9,772 | 9,869 | 9,968 | 10,068 | 10,169 | 10,270 | 10,373 |
| 3 | 10,401 | 10,505 | 10,610 | 10,716 | 10,823 | 10,931 | 11,040 | 11,151 |
| 4 | 11,181 | 11,292 | 11,405 | 11,519 | 11,633 | 11,751 | 11,868 | 11,987 |
| 5 | 12,019 | 12,139 | 12,261 | 12,383 | 12,507 | 12,632 | 12,758 | 12,886 |
| 6 | 12,921 | 13,050 | 13,180 | 13,312 | 13,445 | 13,580 | 13,715 | 13,853 |
| 7 | 13,890 | 14,029 | 14,169 | 14,311 | 14,454 | 14,598 | 14,744 | 14,892 |
| 8 | 14,931 | 15,081 | 15,232 | 15,384 | 15,538 | 15,693 | 15,850 | 16,009 |
| 9 | 16,051 | 16,212 | 16,374 | 16,538 | 16,703 | 16,870 | 17,039 | 17,209 |
| 10 | 17,255 | 17,428 | 17,602 | 17,778 | 17,956 | 18,135 | 18,317 | 18,500 |
| 11 | 18,549 | 18,735 | 18,922 | 19,111 | 19,302 | 19,495 | 19,690 | 19,887 |
| 12 | 19,940 | 20,140 | 20,341 | 20,549 | 20,750 | 20,958 | 21,167 | 21,378 |
| 13 | 21,436 | 21,692 | 21,887 | 22,096 | 22,306 | 22,529 | 22,755 | 22,982 |
| 14 | 23,044 | 23,274 | 23,507 | 23,743 | 23,979 | 24,219 | 24,461 | 24,706 |
| 15 | 24,667 | 25,191 | 25,438 | 25,716 | 26,000 | 26,299 | 26,579 | 26,848 |
| 16 | 26,878 | 27,174 | 27,473 | 27,775 | 28,080 | 28,389 | 28,700 | 29,017 |
| 17 | 28,939 | 29,348 | 29,671 | 29,997 | 30,327 | 30,661 | 30,998 | 31,339 |
| 18 | 31,301 | 31,696 | 32,044 | 32,397 | 32,753 | 33,113 | 33,478 | 33,846 |
| 19 | 33,899 | 34,331 | 34,698 | 34,998 | 35,373 | 35,752 | 36,136 | 36,524 |
| 20 | 36,567 | 36,970 | 37,376 | 37,786 | 38,203 | 38,623 | 39,048 | 39,478 |
| 21 | 39,453 | 39,927 | 40,367 | 40,811 | 41,259 | 41,713 | 42,172 | 42,636 |
| 22 | 42,552 | 43,131 | 43,596 | 44,075 | 44,560 | 45,050 | 45,546 | 46,047 |
| 23 | 46,084 | 46,571 | 47,062 | 47,561 | 48,125 | 48,654 | 49,190 | 49,731 |
| 24 | 49,730 | 50,257 | 50,850 | 51,410 | 51,975 | 52,547 | 53,125 | 53,709 |
| 25 | 53,730 | 54,321 | 54,918 | 55,523 | 56,133 | 56,750 | 57,375 | 58,006 |
| 26 | 58,038 | 58,686 | 59,312 | 59,964 | 60,624 | 61,291 | 61,965 | 62,646 |
| 27 | 62,670 | 63,366 | 64,067 | 64,781 | 65,474 | 66,194 | 66,922 | 67,656 |
| 28 | 67,684 | 68,428 | 69,181 | 69,942 | 70,711 | 71,489 | 72,276 | 73,071 |
| 29 | 73,099 | 73,903 | 74,716 | 75,537 | 76,368 | 77,208 | 78,058 | 78,918 |
| 30 | 78,948 | 79,819 | 80,699 | 81,590 | 82,476 | 83,385 | 84,302 | 85,230 |
| 31 | 85,230 | 90,395 | 91,351 | 93,003 | 94,029 | 95,066 | 96,106 | 97,163 |
| 32 | 103,000 | 104,133 | 105,278 | 106,437 | 107,607 | 108,791 | 109,988 | 111,198 |
| 33 | 120,000 | | | | | | | |

The Civil Service Commission shall work with all government entities for the speedy nationwide adoption of output-based performance management systems required for the granting of step increments in the bureaucracy.

With enhanced compensation for public servants, our nation takes a giant step toward greater morale, efficiency, responsiveness, integrity, and progressiveness in the government.

**Mabuhay ang Lingkod Bayang Pilipino!**

HON. RICARDO L. SALUDO
Chairman
Civil Service Commission

HON. BERNARDO P. ABESAMIS
Chairman of the Board
Career Executive Service Board

MERCEDITA EMAR S. BALBOZA
Chairperson
Confederation of Independent Unions in the Public Sector

ESPERANZA S. OCAMPO
National President
Philippine Government Employees Association

ANNIE ENRIQUEZ-GERON
General Secretary
Public Service Labor Independent Confederation

**UPHOLD HONEST, EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICE! FIGHT RED TAPE!**

WHAT'S INSIDE
History beckons /A24

Sunday SPORTS
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

## *Seaba notes: Enduring Yeng-Roehl partnership*

By Manny R. Castillo

MEGAN, INDONESIA—THERE IS SO much to enjoy in coaching as far as the "Think Asia!" of Yeng Guiao of the Powerade-Team Pilipinas goes.

Yeng Guiao still has unrealized assistant Roehl Sudworth, his deputy dating as far back as 1993 when he still called the shots for the defunct Swift Pep Cola squads in the Philippine Basketball Association.

"Maybe coach Yeng [believes that Coach Roehl] realized that we've been in this position as a head coach," Sudworth said the December reject during breakfast time chat at the Grand Angkasa Hotel here.

The 69-year-old Hadassis was an alternate of the 6'8" five that played in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. He was veteran in two Asian Games, including the 1962 squad in Jakarta that claimed fifth for the last RP victory in the Asiad.

* * *

Speaking of Hadassis, the bald-headed former University of the East Warrior claims to have seen—and played with—the best players the Philippines has ever produced and to examine him that no one is greater than Caloy "the Big Cobra" Loyzaga.

Hadassis said that Loyzaga is the most total package as far as any Philippine product in the sport is concerned.

"The only thing that Caloy lacked was the power which Moe Dumalanta, the four-time PBA MVP, had," he said.

"Caloy can drive [to the basket], pass, shoot the outside shot and defend against the best players," said Hadassis, who played against Loyzaga when the Big Difference was near retirement.

# Powerade-RP five crushes Malaysia by 27 in Seaba

By Manny R. Castillo

**MEGAN, INDONESIA—IF AT ALL, the crowd that packed the small venue Saturday night didn't notice anything lacking with Powerade-Team Pilipinas.**

But not coach Yeng Guiao.

The Nationals took quite a while in adjusting to the international brand of play before hammering out a 120-73 victory over Malaysia that eased the nerves of the eighth Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) men's cage championships at the Angkasagara Local Hall here.

After a shaky start, the Filipinos blitzed the Malaysians at the start of the fourth period behind a full court press en route to a 74-54 lead at the end of the third with an instantaneous 46-30 halftime.

Arvid Janico scored 19 points and grabbed eight rebounds, joining hands with Jared Dillinger in providing some spectacular above-the-rim plays that had a pro-Indonesian crowd up on its feet together with a small Filipino audience.

"We need to improve our defense," Guiao told Filipino sportswriters later. "It's very difficult because they [Filipinos] don't get the protection they usually get in the PBA (as far as referees' calls are concerned)."

"Adjustments have to be made as far as the referees' calls are concerned," he added.

But Guiao left one of his best technical men late on. The Ateneo coach Ryan Buyco pulled his left hamstring after going for a dribble. The team's trainer refused to give an early prognosis, but Guiao is studying the team for the worst.

"We're down to one point guard, Willie Miller, and he can't even a natural point guard," the coach said in Jay-Jay Helterbrand has already been ridden off the roster for this tournament also because of a hamstring pull.

The Philippines held Malaysia to just 23 points in the first period to build a 10-point lead before taking its first 20-point spread at the start of the third as Art Tolentino completed a three-point play for 47-27.

**The scores:**

**PHILIPPINES (120)**—Janico 19, Ingles 16, Dillinger 15, Miller 12, Tolentino 11, De Guzman 10, Yap 9, Pascual 8, Mariscal 7, Espinosa 5, Arnaiz 0.

**MALAYSIA (73)**—Tang 14, Nor 12, Izad 10, Amir 7, Syah 7, Kasan 6, Zhan 5, Chip 2, Ghazi 2, Isa 2, Ishak 2, Shahrin 2.

**Quarters:** 26-13, 46-23, 74-54, 120-73.

## Attacked fan bewails 'bias' PBA decision

ATTENTION, THE PBA INVALLEGED!

consulted by members of the Sin. Lucio Beatty team led by Madonna Aquino-Allumbert might pointedly deplored the hasty manner which concommissioner Sonny Barrios "overlooked the case without the benefit of an objective and impartial investigation."

While he was the victim of the incident which occurred after the Lucio 91-84 defeat to Sturgis King in their semifinal clash, Galvez said he was not interested clear his name, with Barrios expressing "seemingly biased conclusions without even getting his side."

While thirdest met with figures of Alaska after-noon, Galvez said the commissioner did not bother to talk to him. At the same time, Barrios, in newspaper reports, concluded that "there was no physical contact from Globino," rescinded by the Kraken. Barrios continued to then he arrived at the decision after hearing the testimonies of impartial witnesses whose credibility is beyond reproach, including the PBA technical staff, and not just because of what Madonnold has.

"Barrios's testimony was part of the clue process because he was the accused," said Beatty.

Aside Galvez's side, Barrios said he'd heard Erwin from Globino's friend Ruiz.

Globino, who reported the incident to the police and got a medical certificate to prove that he sustained injuries, went to the Legazpi officers protection to see his governors, denying that he headbutted somebody at Antonio's daughter while growing on the attack.

Globino also claimed his companion was his Lucio team manager and governor Buddy Encomendo as among those who attacked him. When contacted, Encomendo denied the allegation.

"I never laid a hand on him (Globino)," said Encomendo. "I merely held on to him because I saw him running away from the bystander and crying daughter of my player (Angelo) who was pointing at him."

"At that point, as a league official it's my duty to stop anyone who's running away from the scene," added Encomendo. "He should have explained his side."

Globino, who was accompanied by PLgalvez, Jr. Basketball Association and Federation of Indus- Directors of Commissioner vice president Dilip Basilosa, said he's "not precluding his right to file criminal and other charges against the parties concerned."

# GTK tenders resignation

PERHAPS BY COINCIDENCE, PDC special assistant to the president Go Teng Kok headed in his resignation from his post on the day my last column came out.

According to my Chinese associate who relayed the info, this move was prompted by the current sexual controversy where GTK's assistance was sought by the group of Tel Unit, the then high-flying newly elected Bicol Representative of the Philippines (PRP) president in the last May 2007 elections.

Tel Unit was seeking the reinstatement of Gabuyo as, who is said to support the Julian Cattocho-Tiri-Li Ling faction which is also claiming VFP leadership.

My sources said quitting his PDC post meant GTK was no longer his ties with Gabuyo, leaving him free to help the Tel Unit group, without being considered vulnerable to opposition of loyalty.

Did Gabuyo accept his resignation, I asked GTK yesterday. Even Attio-Attio he was supposed to have submitted it.

GTK said Gabuyo was supposed to have left for Italy where he handled his late cousin's estate. He expected that on announcement would be made by the time he returned.

"But the trip to Italy was cancelled, and Peping would not accept my resignation. He said he had too many problems to at this time."

GTK said he will focus in Bicol's easy to-bird with the top seat in Camarines.

"The entire Chinese community is aware of what's happening in the VFP and they don't like it one bit. They blame their Tim, who is concerned by the controversies surrounding

# 3 Davao pugs advance

By Jane Navarro

PANABO CITY—THREE JUNIOR BOXERS from the highly-respected Davao Del Norte public outfit made it to the title fights of the 2009 Asian Shop Kilusbayan amateur boxing tournament yesterday.

Pahuang Pembarosa gold medalist Mark Anthony Barriga produced another stellar performance by stopping Davao City's Alejandro Tiburones with one minute and 35 seconds left in the second round of their pinweight clash.

The youngest brother of IBF mandatory Joel Barriga sealed a gold medal clash against Julian Jilbo of Davao City.

Silkin sidekick Jonathan Bellajo of Agkapan, Baleduno, 20, 49, on the fourth day of the event, which serves as one of the qualifiers for the Shop national championships.

Bejie Tiburones duplicated Barriga's feat with a Referee Stopped Contest (RSC) triumph over Cebu Jay Dedman of Davao in 17 seconds of the second round of their light bantamweight fight.

Tiburones will meet Misamis Oriental's Warrio Christopher Baturia, who outpointed Valencia, Bukidnon's Renan Rotoni, 45-23, in the other light bantamweight outside held at the Panabo Multi-Purpose Tourism Cultural Sports Center.

Buffy Catoto, another product of the Davao Del Norte stable owned by former representative Tonyboy Plaitando, joined Barriga and Tiburones in the finals after a 29-20 win over South Cotabato's Jerome Lumanad.

Davao City's Engelbert Wendale, a 21-0 winner over Cabadbaran, Agusan Del Norte's Renato Llorente in their quarterfinal encounter in the event. Pahuang Pembarosa in Tacloban City, will win it up with Davao in the junior flyweight finals.

The other junior division winners were light fly Daryl Basadre of Misamis Oriental and bantam Eduardo Ebarat of Cotabato.

# UST Tigresses, Lady Stags eye finals duel

By Cedelf F. Tapao

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS and San Sebastian try to forge a rematch of last year's second conference finals when they gun for sweeps of their respective best-of-three semifinal series in the sixth Shakey's V League at the FEBTI Flying V arena in San Juan.

The Tigresses aim to finish off the Far Eastern U Lady Tamaraws at 2 p.m., before the Lady Stags shoot for a repeat win against the Adamson Lady Falcons.

The Tigresses and the Lady Stags met in last year's second conference finals with San Sebastian winning in three games for its first V League title.

San Sebastian presented on an Adamson squad replanned by its guest players to back out a 25-14, 25-20, 25-18 victory. But the Lady Stags had to go through some serious moments in the third set, before putting away the Lady Falcons, who missed Norina Basatera and Joanna Carpio.

Basatera, the reigning Most Valuable Player, and Carpio, along with UST guest player Michelle Carolino are representing the country in an international beach volleyball tournament in Bermuda and remain doubtful tomorrow today.

San Sebastian coach Roger Gorayeb has urged his players to tack their games up a notch against the Lady Falcons.

"We can't afford to lose our focus against Adamson," warned Gorayeb.

# Long shot bowlers grab the spotlight

By Marc Anthony Reyes

UNHEADLED BOWLERS JACKson Go and Nida Lagrimda scanned to the lead in the amateur Masters qualifying Friday night of the 38th Philippine International Open tenpin bowling championships at Bunga's Multilevel Bowl in Malate.

Good MTBA added a 636 to his previous 599 for a 1,233 total and the leadership in the men's division while NidaPe Lagrimda rolled a 599 to go with her previous 542 for a 1,233 leading up-pregate to women's play.

Kenneth Pinebel (1,218) and Ivy Sioson (1,199), both of MTBA, trailed Go while TBAM-Primo's Lorna Labrosca (1,103), and PTBA's Julie Cabarrogan (1,092) took second and third behind Lagrimda.

There was little movement in the elite categories except for national pool member Ryan Corcuerra, who moved up to third place in the ladies' Masters class D.

He shot 623 and 635 for a 1,280 total, closing in on second placer, teammate Rini Lao (1,272) and 2007 champ Lita Del Rosario, who showed the way with 1,264.

Things are expected to heat up over the weekend when world class bowlers start arriving led by Tim Mack of the United States and Hussain Al Sawadi of United Arab Emirates.

SLAMMA Queen of San Beda cries as grabs the rebound against Saleh Al Hussani (middle) and Nina Bahaj (right) of Ateneo.

# Warriors nip Cards

PAUL LEE AND JAMES MANtiniz unloaded big triples as University of the East survived Mapua, 86-78 and clinched the first semifinal berth to the 2009 Filoil Flying V Pre-Season MVP Cup yesterday in the Filoil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Lee's triple wiped out a two-point deficit and gave the Valiant a 79-78 lead before Martinez all but sealed the deal with another triple later.

Mapua actually made it to the quarterfinals after the Blue Eagles decided to withdraw from the tournament, owing to a scheduling conflict.

Tournament organizers, meanwhile, have accepted the decision of Ateneo to withdraw from the tournament. The Blue Eagles completed their eliminations campaign with a 3-2 card following an 80-77 loss to San Beda Friday night.

"We accept and respect their decision to withdraw from the tournament at this stage and we wish them well (in) the coming UAAP season," said Filoil Flying V Sports chair Mandy Ochoa.

San Beda's win paved the way for a 'doubleheader' of a guarantee match between the Red Lions and La Salle on Wednesday at 6 p.m. Sime Silva, Cirdo Bucbuc

## Now women's cage tournament formed

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GOT A SHOT BY THE MAKING IN THE creation of the Philippine Women's Basketball League (PWBL), MBT Commissioner Billy C. Fernandez announced yesterday.

Its first tournament is tentatively set in October just after the collegiate tournaments.

DRUM chair Prospero "Butch" Pichay, who also heads the chess association in the country, has been elected chair emeritus with Fernandez as vice-chair and commissioner.

Interested parties may contact the 8813287/8188 or 8819888. For teams/players application you may call/text 0922-8061606.

## Pearl-I kicks off today at San Lazaro

MANILA JOCKEY CLUB, INC. HOSTS THE PHILIPPINE RACING COMmission's banked Pearl-I Stakes Race today at the San Lazaro Leisure & Business Park in Carmona, Cavite.

Joining the 1,800-meter chance for the P300,000 champion's purse are top gallopers Celebrating, Pro-gnosis Ben, Ido and Seven.

MJC chair and CEO lawyer Alfonso Reyno Jr. thanked the Philracom, headed by Hon. Ferdinand Rojas II and race fans for their continued patronage of the MJC programs.

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# History beckons

LOOK MA, NO LOOK Roger Federer executes for a return against Juan Martin Del Potro. AFP/FILE

## Federer moves to within a victory of completing tennis mission

PARIS—FRESH OFF A RAGGED, BOGGED, FIVE-SET FRENCH OPEN SEMIFinal victory Friday, Roger Federer was leaving for the night when a dozen or so fans drew his attention.

They wanted photos and autographs, and Federer obliged, signing hats, a jersey, even one girl's tennis polo shirt. As Federer nodded off, a man shouted: "Who's Juanito? Please?"

Pausing for a moment before sliding into a car, Federer turned and, with a quick wave of his skilled right arm, replied, "OK."

Ah, if only it were that simple. For all his accomplishments, for all his trophies and records, Federer now wants...much?—to do something he never has: win a final at Roland Garros.

By running back to beat No. 3 seeded Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina 3-6, 7-6 (2), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, Federer moved within one victory of his first French Open championship—and of an unprecedented career Grand Slam, at least one title in each of tennis' four majors.

"There's still one more step," Federer said.

He's come nearly this close in the past, losing each of the past three French Open finals to Rafael Nadal, along with a semifinal four years ago. But this time, Nadal is not around to torment him, having been stunned by Soderling in the fourth round.

"Obviously," Federer said, "it's nice to see someone else for a change."

Since the start of the 2008 French Open, Federer is 5-4 against Nadal at Roland Garros, 29-0 against everyone else. Similarly, over the course of his career, Federer is 2-3 against Nadal in Grand Slam finals, 11-0 against all other opponents.

Federer lost—or happens to have a 9-0 career record against Soderling, who will be playing in his first Grand Slam final. He'd never been past the third round in 21 previous majors but swirled all the last two games of a 6-3, 7-5, 3-7, 4-6, 6-4 victory over No. 12 Fernando Gonzalez of Chile in Friday's first semifinal.

Does Soderling believe he has a chance against Federer?

"He's going to be the favorite, by far," the big-serving Soderling said. "But I think Nadal was the favorite against me as well."

Soderling's first Grand Slam championship match will be Federer's 19th, matching Ivan Lendl's record, and the Swiss star's 15th in the past 16 major tournaments.

Three spots, Federer told similar edges in experience and head-to-head matchups against del Potro, a 20-year-old playing in his first major semifinal. Federer won in his 20th consecutive Grand Slam semifinal...double the second-longest streak any man compiled—and had won all 12 previous sets across the matches with del Potro.

Yet early on, del Potro played furiously using his long legs to speed around the court and his long arms to whip winners punctuated by loud grunts. . . AP

## Korean gains final vs Fernando

HYERIM NAM JEEPNEYS Korean through with a pair of surprisingly easy victories in the race to avenge a shootout with Colombian Candelaria Meek Fernando for the Philippine Amateur Golf Championship presented by Samsung at the Eastridge Golf Club in Binangonan, Rizal yesterday.

Irene Ariñas, playing while recovering from a golf scholarship in the US, scored a dual with Crystal Ingersol for the Ladies crown.

Wong scored a stunning 4-0, 2 up win of top qualifier Bernard Marie Jr. for quarterfinals then upset Mahang's Ring Indonesia, 5 & 4, in the semis to move within a win of becoming the first woman to win the national crown.

Fernando also posted a 5 & 4 semifinal victory over local bet Dini Villanueva after ousting Mikki Arboleda, 4 & 3, in the quarterfinals.

Ariñas outclassed Chalisa Banda, 3 & 2, in the semis while Ingersol eliminated No. 1 qualifier and Scotland teammate Andrea Unson, 2 & 1, in the event conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

## Airmen bag softball title

AIR FORCE BOOKED THE HEAVYWEIGHTS TO tour Tagaytay City, 7-3, in only six innings to successfully defend its men's title in the 12-team Ucollect 2009 National Open softball championships Friday night at the Rizalino Navarro Complex in Pasig City.

The Legends of Pampanga, likewise, survived the otherwise unfavorable conditions in the country's only standard softball field and outlasted Adamson-Manila, 10-2, also in regulation six to become the first club in recent years to win the women's crown in the first try.

The event, which drew around 27 teams, was organized by the Amateur Softball Association Philippines headed by Amy Ariñas-Ucollect.

Aimee Bay Sotto, over 50, proved he still has a strong pitching by anchoring a strong showing for the Airmen, who struck for four in the bottom of the fourth and fifth frames.

Goddy Mencio starred for the Legends, beating the UAAP champions Lady Falcons to meet Sun Mo.

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino
Sunday BIZ

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■ **Want to work** abroad? Join a BPO company first /B2

# Lopez family patriarch tells all

*Editor's Note: Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), the country's largest electric utility, was to subscribed with the Lopez conglomerate that the prospect of the family selling a big chunk of its shares was almost unthinkable.*

*But the group did, and the decision to sell the shares and to partners with the First Pacific group was one by much speculation and talks of discussions and exchanges within the family.*

*In these remarks delivered during the 87th annual stockholders' meeting of First Philippine Holdings Corp. last May 25, at the Meralco Theater, the patriarch of the Lopez family attempts to set the record straight.*

**By Oscar M. Lopez**

LOOKING BACK ON 2008, THERE were three major events that greatly influenced our corporations.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD (From left) San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang, Meralco chair Manuel M. Lopez and PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan emerge from the Meralco stockholders' meeting.

First, the global financial crisis and consequent recession came upon us with unexpected suddenness during the last quarter of 2008.

The second major event was our divestment of our toll road business through the sale of our equity interest in First Philippine Infrastructure Inc. or North Luzon Expressway. This was a necessary part of our defense of our investments in Meralco.

And the third major event is our divestment of 60 percent of our equity interest in Meralco, amounting to 20 percent of the outstanding shares of the utility, to be consummated on or before August. This will reduce our stake in Meralco to 33.4 percent.

At the start of 2007, First Holdings directly owned 17.7 percent of the outstanding shares of Meralco, comprising what had been returned to the

(MORE) /A4

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# Want to work abroad? Join a BPO company first

By Vincent Cabreza
Business Central Luzon

ANGELES CITY—WHAT JOB gives young Filipinos a high salary for basic skills?

Most people would say an agent work, but a recent study indicates that this is also the character of the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry in the country capital.

In fact, the nature of local BPO firms makes this industry a good training ground for future overseas Filipino workers, who hone their English proficiency to call centers before moving abroad after two years of work, said Mikeh Kendrick, a research affiliate of the Cauilliaux Studies Center at the University of the Philippines Baguio.

Hendricks presented his initial findings on the emergence of offshore services in Baguio for a graduate paper on business geography in developing countries at the University of Amsterdam in The Netherlands.

UP social science professors, who analyzed Hendricks' study said they were drawn to the paradox of BPOs, whose first line of workers are highly trained fresh graduates who may be overqualified for call center or transcription agent work.

The industry has several labor problems because it often celebrates high pay, and is accused of zero benefits for such employees that leave the firm, Hendricks said, to illustrate this "paradox."

Hendricks said he set out to understand what draws BPO firms to the city and ended up tracing down the behavior and competency of its stock boys.

He said the site inspection because the Philippines remains "a country of migrants."

Hendricks said he assumed that BPOs help capture—and bind to the city—the local skilled labor, who are valid citizens but look for overseas employment.

But his study suggests that BPOs keep these workers for too short a time to skew the local job behavior.

Baguio has been fulfilled by the government as a transition zone for BPOs, even if Metro Manila still hosts 80 percent of offshore centers.

Boiling a little 14 economic briefing sponsored by the Bank of Commerce, economists of the Philippine Exporters Confederation (PHILEXPORT) said the "cost-saving advantages of outsourcing" meant that BPO remains "key drivers of growth" for countries confronting the global recession.

But the Philippines in particular, BPOs are looking at an increased government revenues because of the "availability and drop in the cost of telecommunications," said economist Ramon Clavecilla.

Although a fledgling Filipino made by most standards, the BPO industry posted profits that grew from $4.9 billion to 2007 to a projected $7.9 billion by [illegible], Clavecilla said.

There are between 35 and 50 licensed and unlicensed BPO firms operating in Baguio, Hendricks said, which are owned by over 30,000 employees.

Of the city's potential labor force of 105,000 this year, BPO firms account for 3.7 percent of that total job pool, he said.

Hendricks said the "push factors" showing firms to Baguio are highlighted by the exorbitant rental expenses and housing expenses required for technology-led businesses, and the relatively low cost of living here.

The presence of seven major universities in Baguio also attracts BPO firms to look pool of English-proficient talents, owing to the city's role as an American-built community in 1909, he said.

Call CENTERS have become training ground for aspiring OFWs. [illegible]

# Lopez patriarch tells all

From page B1

ive petition under a Supreme Court ruling in 2001 and additional shares that are held gradually been able to accumulate more then.

But because of an agreement with Duma Francos of Spain, are controlled, directly or indirectly, an aggregate of 26.8 percent of the outstanding shares of Meralco. While the combined ownership interest was by no means a majority, it was the single largest block of shares privately-owned and controlled, and it was enough for us to be able to obtain management control of Meralco under normal conditions.

## Significant threats

In 2007, however, two things threatened the status quo. Duma Francos had never realized the returns it had expected from its investment in Meralco, and had expressed a desire to divest its shares in order to concentrate on its investments elsewhere in the world.

At the same time, we became aware there were hostile investors determined to acquire a controlling block of shares in Meralco in order to displace us from its management and to reduce First Holdings to the role of a passive investor in the utility, with absolutely no say in the way the utility was going to run itself.

We decided that we could not allow this to happen. If we allowed ourselves to be displaced to a passive investor's position, with neither participation nor a veto right in the decision making of Meralco, then the value of our stake in Meralco would be permanently impaired and eroded.

We would not be able to influence in the slightest policy and would no be able to ensure that the proper decisions would be taken to enhance the utility's value, not only in the interest it considers to be consistent and sustainable, but also in how it is organized by the Financial markets.

Even if we subsequently decided to divest our interest in Meralco, we would have to do so from a position of weakness and would not, therefore, be able to command a good price for our shares. We also felt that if we were totally marginalized at Meralco, we would not be able to safeguard its local role in the power industry.

We had to move, and we did so by acquiring Union Resources' stake in Meralco. But this was not enough because it still left us vulnerable. Because we also negotiated to acquire part of the stake in Meralco held by the Meralco Employees' Provident Fund amounting to 6.9 percent.

Combined, these acquisitions enabled us to raise our equity stake in Meralco to 33.6 percent, enough for a primary of vote in major decisions. The acquisition did not come cheap—in all, it cost us approximately P18.6 billion to increase our stake in Meralco, depleting our cash reserves and forcing us to use up borrowing capacity.

ESCARIO LOPEZ

## Good business sense

At the time, we felt that increasing our share in Meralco also made good business sense because of the dismal switch, under the Epira (Electric Power Industry Reform Act) Law to performance based ratemaking mechanism, or "PBR," which would allow Meralco to keep profiting as the returns for Meralco. Unfortunately, it is only recently that PBR has been allowed to take effect. The delay effectively denied Meralco a rate increase since 2003.

It turned out that our fears were unfortunately justified.

During the annual stockholders' meeting of Meralco in May 27, 2009, the GSIS, under Winston Garcia, attempted to wrest management away of of Meralco by hook or by crook, by working to prevent First Holdings from voting its shares and to preside during the process of electing the new board.

Further, this intervention was abetted by an improper and illegal move ruling on the part of the Securities Exchange Commission, one that has since been completely repudiated by the Supreme Court, which upheld Meralco against GSIS.

Not too long thereafter, we learned that GSIS had sold its investment in Meralco to San Miguel Corporation, which used Hamilton Securities in entering into Meralco.

During the second half of 2007, another major event took place that was not directly related to the goings-on at Meralco, but would have a major impact on our defense of Meralco. Our subsidiary, First Gen Corporation, won the privatization bidding for PHIVOLCS. While we

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## Worse time

Right smack in the middle of our battle to defend our position in Meralco, the global financial and economic crisis came upon us. It could not have come at a worse time. Under the circumstances, it would have been extremely imprudent for us to incur more debt than we had already done, particularly in view of the client-eating global economy.

And so, as we moved from 2008 to 2009, we were thinking each from major decisions to ensure its survival and its ability to survive any further shocks that might take place. First, we decided to sell our stake in the North Luzon Expressway. This was a painful decision given how much we had to endure in our investment into the success it is today. Nevertheless, it was necessary given the times.

Second, we wanted to find a source for Meralco who could significantly increase its value potential and bring it to new heights. Even though it is a rate-regulated business, we felt that there is room for us to earn a decent return, provided that the regulators are not politically influenced to deny the utility what it is entitled to under the law.

On the other hand, the distribution of electricity is no longer a business with a significant potential for growth. It can only grow as fast as population and economic growth, and both tend to grow globally, not spectacularly. It is also not possible to increase the profit potential of the business other than by improving the efficiency of the network and infusing technical and operational know. Again, there are only incremental incentives.

The key, therefore, is to enable Meralco to create new activities with higher growth and profit potential. We had then in divesting a 20 percent interest in Meralco to the PLDT Group, we have forged a strategic alliance that would enable us to continue to participate, both as investment and as business partners, in a Meralco whose potential value has been greatly enhanced to the possibilities of synergy with PLDT.

From being the country's dominant distributor of electricity, Meralco will have the potential to become a participant in the wider platform for multimedia products in the broadband world of tomorrow.

I have been often asked, how fond of a son Meralco is to the Lopez family and, to First Holdings.

First, I should point out that since coming back into the ownership and management of Meralco after 2006, we have never enjoyed a majority ownership position in Meralco. Only a 15.2 percent stake was returned to us and over a period of 20 years, we increased this stake to 27.7 percent.

## More shares

We enjoyed management leadership and resided in Meralco because other stockholders placed their trust in our ability to manage Meralco properly, and were willing to give us their proxies. Only in late 2007 did we feel the need to acquire more shares, in order to at least enjoy the right of veto in board decisions.

Here, we have sold back down to a 15.4 percent stake in Meralco and the composition of ownership of Meralco has changed in a way that does not ensure us of continued control.

But as I have just explained, our actions have put Meralco in a stronger position for the future. Although our stake in Meralco reduced, it is now potentially part of a greater and bigger story.

As I wrote in our annual report, for us, it is more than a matter of ownership or equity. It is about participating and enhancing value of Meralco.

Investing in a solid, well-managed and publicly regulated business is our country markedly requires government support. If there is anything that I would say to the business model, with PLDT and San Miguel Corporation as major players in Meralco, I feel that these worldmen can be better at demand.

Let me now discuss how we see ourselves moving forward into this very uncertain period of global financial distress and recession.

The first thing I will emphasize is that our role to the PLDT Group of companies is similar to Meralco—we are a silver lining over and above providing us early to settle our debts and to take advantage of investment opportunities.

It is like insurance as from a Cash-122 strategy of having to defend our position in Meralco. At the end of the year, we did not possibly even under the current business political and global financial environment. We look forward to continuing to participate in Meralco as an owner with representation on the board.

## Synergistic opportunities

If Meralco is able to raise upon the synergistic opportunities that it has been presented, then we stand to realize as much value, if not more, from our remaining 13.4 percent stake than if we had tried to defend our 33.4 percent stake.

There are also opportunities in the that are significantly more attractive than Meralco, that we also have the options to follow or sell out at significantly higher values than would have been possible if we had opted to engage in a battle of attrition.

The road back to growth and prosperity for our country and for the world, will not be an easy one. But like all crises, the world eventually pass. And as we emerge, hopefully into a new era of prolonged economic growth and prosperity, there are formidable challenges ahead of us that First Holdings and Meralco must be ready to confront if we are to remain relevant.

Over the years, we have developed the expertise and track record of running go-first plants to the more exacting global standards of efficiency and reliability.

With First Gen's acquisition of a controlling interest in Energy Development Corporation (EDC), we now have capacity in the Visayas and Mindanao grids, and much larger headroom for expansion in both areas.

And when we pursue promising businesses and to be clubbed poorly, in terms of generation of electricity, we must now also be a developer of geothermal steam as a fuel for the generation of electricity, by our own plants as well as by those of MPC.

Through some 40 years of harnessing geothermal energy for the production of electricity, EDC has amassed a treasure trove of knowledge, experience and expertise in geothermal power.

It is one of the few corporations in the world to such knowledge.

EDC is one of the only Filipino companies with considering support to bring to the global arena. It is just the platform we will use to pursue our aspirations to become a global company.

If you sense that I am excited about our future prospects, then you are absolutely right and I hope that I have imparted some of that excitement to you.

A few years from now, we will probably look back on the global economic events of 2008 as a blip in an unbroken period of relatively stable world.

## GOINGS-ON

### Meralco CSR program cited

MERALCO, ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP utility companies, recently got a citation for its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. Business magazine Asiamoney included Meralco as one of the companies in the Philippines with the "best CSR practice."

The citation was part of Asiamoney's 9th annual poll of Asia's top companies rated by 233 investors and analysts across the region. The results revealed which companies are viewed as the best managed in the region in several categories, which included CSR practice.

"This citation is something the company is truly proud of," said Christopher Ng, head of Meralco's CSR office. "Meralco prides itself not only as a company that is one of the best managed in Asia, but also one of the most active investors in CSP endeavors."

Aside from the Meralco Otder School, Meralco is also involved in the Brgada Eskwela where the company's engineers and linemen visit various public schools to check the safety of their electrical facility. Meralco's CSR also comes into fore during natural disasters such as typhoons or earthquakes in putting cost-free power to evacuation centers to affected areas.

### Aboitiz wins Excel Award

ABOITIZ EQUITY VENTURES INC. (AEV) chairman Jon Ramon Aboitiz was recently named one of the winners of the Communication Excellence Organizations or CEO Excel Awards 2009 given by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Philippines.

Aboitiz, who won in the Heritage Company category, joins a distinguished list of awardees from various sectors recognized for effectively using communications in enhancing the reputation and profitability of their respective organizations.

Through Savannah CEO Excel Awards, IABC Philippines recognizes CEOs, presidents or top communicators for their skilful use of communication strategies and tools to achieve business, management or social development goals. Awardees are presented the awards for their employees and other stakeholders in harnessing communication skills at their work and leadership to excel in crisis situations, but during trying times as well.

### Big travel firms coming to RP

ASE TRAVEL wholesalers from around the world are coming to the country for the Philippine International Tourism Fair (PITF) 2009, the premier and only global travel event held annually in the tourism capital of Central Visayas.

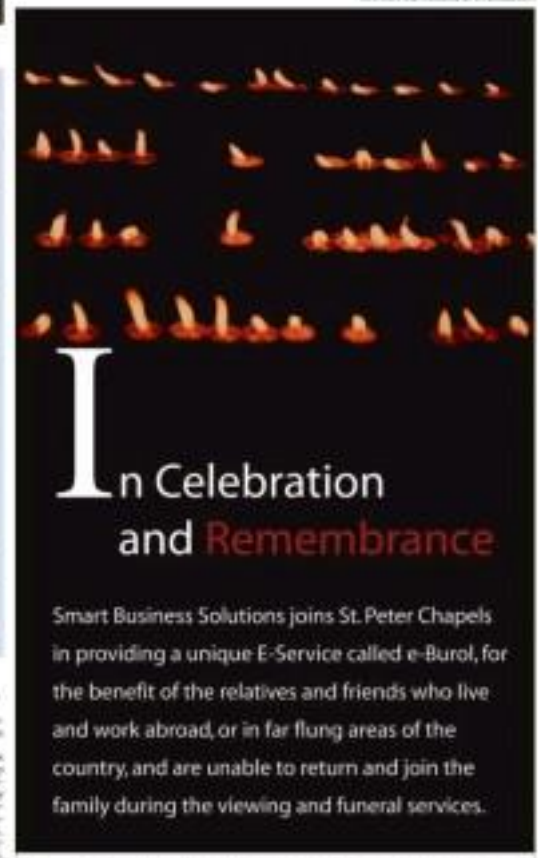
Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said the travel agents were invited by the Department of Tourism (DOT) to check out the country's tourist destinations, products and services that they could offer to their clients in their respective countries.

"More than a hundred of them were released and emerging markets can bring in hordes of inbound tourists and that contributes significantly to the DOT's efforts to raise our tourism volume and dollar receipts," Durano said.

These foreign buyers will have pre-scheduled one-on-one business meetings with local sellers of tourism packages during the PITF's Travel Market Exchange (Trade).

Managed by DOT marketing arm Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC), Tourism is a full day of negotiations that generate highly productive and lucrative deals.

Industry members also can locate the PITF and/or Trade on May 28 at booth numbers SE2SE076, SE2SE084, SE2SE087 or send pdf specification costs to the Trade secretariat fax: 8250014 8, 8250729 or email: tradeb@pcvc.gov.ph.




# RP finds new reason . . .

From page B1

the campaign alone, Sing Kitchens was already able to collect more than 400 stubs.

As of mid-May, the campaign has already collected more than 37,000 stubs from three SM malls alone.

SM North Edsa's The Block plans four to a little South from May 15-31. Other booths were placed at the SM Mall of Asia from May 14-25 and at the SM Megamall Building A from May 15-31.

The more than 37,000 stubs that the campaign has already collected are from three SM malls alone and exclude those destined to Sony Kitchens Experience Shops and online via the official campaign website.

Sarah Duterte will make their rounds of other SM malls in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, to allow individuals from other parts of the country to share their smiles for a good cause.

From June 2-7, Sarah Duterte was placed at SM Cebu, SM Davao and SM Iloilo. Booths would also be set up at SM Pampanga, SM Baguio and SM Manila from June 9-15.

Sarah Duterte Sony Kitchens Experience Shops will continue to accept stubs downstairs up to the end of the campaign period. Participating stores include those in the SM City Manila Roha Cybercocoa, SM Megamall Cyberzone, SM Mall of Asia, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Greenhills 1, Glorietta 1 Digital Exchange, Robinsons, Ayala Center Cebu, SM City Cebu Cybercocoa, SM Pampanga, Gaisano Mall Davao, NCCC Mall Davao, Limketkai Mall Cagayan de Oro, SM Marikina, SM City Bacoloed and SM City Davao.

"This is a good way to uplift people's spirits," relates Tony Eduvoen product marketing manager Visit Dela Cruz.

Who knows? Maybe yours is the smile that can launch a million proverbial celebration. *With a report from Ivyne B. Dela Cruz, Inquirer Visayas*

# Milking profit from carabaos

From page B1

the rest is processed into pasteurized milk, chocolate milk, low-fat, pasteurized plain and yema, white cheese and pastillas delight. Others for ice cream and cheese processing are also surveyed.

Nabalco collects the raw carabao's milk produced by members and processes and markets the product in major food and pasalubong outlets in Bulacan, Angeles City, Olongapo City, Cabanatuan City, Baguio City and Metro Manila.

From its coping operations using plastic pails and containers, Nabalco has motorcycle-based vans to collect, store and market perishable milk to other cities that can maintain their milk containers for collection and storage.

Almost 700 Bravo Explore farmers with over 800 animals supply it with milk, and the activity has increased their farming income by at least four-fold.

Andy Vallente, 54, is the farmer-beneficiary next door and has two carabaos that he milks every day. It is 11 months in a year. Out of the 10 to 12 liters a day that he collects, he earns a net of P219 per liter or up to P90,000 a month. He can only earn P60,000 maximum per hectare from palay under a year, and only break even during a typhoon.

"Walang lugi sa gatas. Kahit may bagyo, kelan ang pagagatas ni daan? Araw-araw kong kinukuha ang gatas. Even if there is a typhoon, I can still milk my carabao!" he said.

He no longer incurs debt at high interest rates just to get by, unlike before when his only source of income was farming. Today if he needs to borrow money for an emergency, he knows that he will be able to pay it back right away with his income from carabao milk.

Various government agencies, both at the provincial and national levels, have been supporting Nabalco. About half a million pesos worth of milking equipment and capability training (i.e., milk collection, milk quality control and herd management) were provided under the Asian Development Bank's Agricultural Business Communities Project (ABB AFOC) implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform.

Under ADB AFOC nearly 10,000 rural households, or 146 agrarian reform communities (ARCs) in about 1,800 poverty-stricken communities nationwide came to benefit. Of a total project cost of $148.9 million, ADB provided $99.2 million from 1999-09.

To qualify for AFOC farmers must be organized into ARCs. More already-established but lack basic infrastructure and support services to maximize earnings. The project provides them with roads, bridges, communal irrigation, drinking water supply or cattle infrastructure.

For Nabalco, the ADB AFOC provided equipment and its farm-to-market road network in Talavera that improved farmers' access to markets and reduced transportation and hauling costs. The resources used leading to the couple's milk collection and processing machinery center in Barangay San Mateo in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, and the Nabalco Milk Corp. in Cabanatuan City.

With the success of AFOC-related activities completed in 2007, the ADB approved a second phase late last year. It is a follow-on AFOC project focusing on the Southern Philippines where three quarters of the rural poor live. AFOC II would assist 152 ARCs, covering 7,731 barangays with its 157 municipalities of 13 provinces in six regions. Beneficiaries are expected to increase to about 225,000 rural households members with the inclusion of three provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Ramon Teja has been long known as the "Rice Bowl of the Philippines," being the country's largest rice producer. Now he is creating production of carabao milk. It may even be also known as "Dairy Capital of the Philippines."

And with milk and dairy products eating up a fourth of the Philippines' total agricultural imports, the potential of carabao milk farming can indeed be very lucrative and promising.

*(The author is a national officer of the Asian Development Bank.)*

Measuring the loss of a loved one is hard enough, but what more if the place where your loved one will be laid to rest is an even away, and you find yourself powerless not only with grief but with the pressing over how to join your family during this crucial time?

Filipinos overseas have always been steadfast in maintaining communications to family and friends back home. Many who can afford the cost of flying home to attend a wedding, or a graduation or a christening will exhaust all their means in savings for these reasons.

But death sometimes occurs so suddenly and unexpectedly, and usually leaves the family in a financial and emotional dilemma.

Through the e-Burol viewing service at the St. Peter Chapels website, relatives can virtually attend the wake and the funeral in real time, via the first FREE online viewing facility in the Philippines. It may not be the same as actually being present, but the special service is the next best thing, a great opportunity and alternative for those who do not have the luxury of time or capacity to spend thousands of dollars to airfare or wait a short notice and may have even greater sense of loss because of this.

"The idea came about when we saw that our clients needed to connect and share their grief, and we wanted to make it easier for them, since their moments of loss and grief are already a difficult time for them," explains Ch. Mildred Mangaoil, Executive Vice President for the Luneta Marketing and Business development of St. Peter Life Plan, Inc.

"We are in the business of celebrating, honoring and memorializing the lives of Filipinos, offering families a dignified way of mourning and grieving. For those who are working and living abroad, technology based E-Services like e-Burol play a big part in the process of dealing and coping with personal loss."

Because the company would like to protect the privacy of e-Burol usage, a username and password are provided only to family and friends by a Family Care Representative of St. Peter Chapels. They can log on to the website at www.stpetersplan.com.ph to be able to view the wake via the high-speed internet connection which Smart Business Solutions provides, through the power of **Smart Bro Enterprise Edition**, the alternative to DSL that brings bandwidth intensive wireless support to all customers.

St. Peter Chapels is the pioneer Burol in the Philippines in establishing and offering the first Online e-Burol service which is a 24-hour real-time viewing of the departed loved ones' wake via the Internet. Accessible through the official website of the ST. PETER GROUP OF COMPANIES (www.stpeterplan.ph), the online service uses strategically positioned Internet Protocol (IP) cameras to capture a video that provides a 360-degree vantage point of the funeral viewing area which can be viewed at the website. With the help of **Smart Business Solutions**, this E-Service is able to provide another helpful, reliable and alternative communication channel for our Filipino overseas workers.

It's been more than a year in operation, and there have been many positive responses on the e-Burol service. Filipino families from Australia to California have expressed their appreciation and gratitude.

"It's hard to lose a loved one in the Philippines and not come home because of constraints. My brother's passing was heartbreaking but letting go has been easier because of St. Peter Chapels' e-Burol service," shares Teresa Smith, a Filipino migrant in Australia.

Nora Dionisio Cabrera of California adds, "The tribute is truly outstanding and worthy of a permanent keepsake of our father. Please do the same for others. I am now spreading the word here in California to friends and families in Manila, about how every time St. Peter's services are 'thanks again for St. Peter Chapels' care and attention'."

Maintaining Filipino traditions and strengthening bonds among families has always been at the forefront of the commitment of **PLDT** and **Smart**. With this latest collaboration with St. Peter Chapels, this commitment is manifested during crucial moments in life such as experiencing the loss of a loved one. **PLDT** and **Smart** help more Filipinos stay connected during times of loss, and through this many more will, as one in celebrations.

*Signing the contract agreement for e-Burol, using technology in celebrating lives of Filipinos, and offering families a dignified way of mourning from overseas (L-R): MMDT's Dick Perez; PLDT's Percy Sandejas, PLDT's Marissa Santos, St. Peter Group of Companies' York Mangaoil, Ch. Mildred Mangaoil and Portia Mangaoil*

Sunday BIZ

A FACILITY clients, professionally run produces top-quality dairy products.

## Milking profit from carabaos

By Rina Francia
Contributor

TALAVERA, NUEVA ECIJA—This town in Nueva Ecija is known for its fresh carabao's milk and low-fat pastillas de leche. And as the health conscious, there are welcome observations.

Joyce Fontanoza of the provincial agrarian reform office regularly drinks carabao milk herself and shows off her svelte figure and youthful looks that belie her age of 46.

"I am living proof of this," she told visitors. "I not only stay fit and slim, I also have no hypertension because of low levels of cholesterol from carabao milk."

At the center of the dairy activity here is the Nueva Ecija Federation of Dairy Carabao Cooperatives (Fedcarabao), which produces the most carabao milk in the province from among its 17 farmer cooperatives and five associate member cooperatives.

It started with only nine member cooperatives in 2002. Back then, the need to form an umbrella federation became apparent since milk is highly perishable, and the cooperatives needed to compete as a group for better pricing and quality control.

Today, the federation processes 5,000 to 1,200 liters of milk daily, just enough for their small-scale operations. It is far short though of the 1,000 liters/day requirement of a major ice cream maker that approached the group with an exclusive supply contract.

Out of its daily processed volume, most of it, or 600 liters, is sold as raw milk, and

READING ON

# RP finds new reason to smile

## Sony Ericsson seeks to put more kids in school

By Abigail L. Ho

IT ONLY TAKES A MILLION SMILES TO send children to school, and thanks once that they have, in the very least, an elementary education.

That smile that you usually take for granted, "donated" via handset manufacturer Sony Ericsson's Spread the Smiles campaign, can give indigent children from the provinces a spark of hope.

"It's an innovative and happy campaign that will surely put a smile on the faces of children across the country. It will help a lot of children to really develop through active learning in school," says Vanessa Tobin, country representative of the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef).

According to Unicef data, of 10 children who enter grade school, only six end up graduating. Unicef also noted that only 34 percent of Filipino children aged 5-6 years have access to early childhood care and development, while only six of 10 5-year-olds get preschool education.

Unicef considers these indicators alarming because lack of early education and preschool stimulation has been linked to poor school readiness and high incidence of repetition and dropout in early grades.

Unicef added that as of school year 2007-2008, net enrollment in primary school was high at 85 percent but the net enrollment in high school for the same school year was lower at 62 percent. This means that the drop out rates surge as children reach secondary school.

It is estimated that around 11.84 million out-of-school youth in impoverished cities and far-flung communities have yet to enjoy the benefits of education.

SPREAD THE SMILE Unicef country representative Vanessa Tobin (right), Sony Ericsson marketing manager Pia Gil Lacsaga (center) and SM PR for marketing communications group Millie Dizon during the launch of Spread the Smiles to raise a million for Unicef at The Block, SM North EDSA, Quezon City.

Unicef, with the help of Sony Ericsson and partners SM malls and Digipinoy, aims to improve these grim statistics, one smile at a time.

The campaign is simple enough. For every smile that an individual donates, Sony Ericsson will give P1 to Unicef. By the end of the campaign period on June 30, the handset maker aims to collect a million smiles for a P1 million donation to Unicef in the Philippines.

Smile donations can be made in three venues: Sony Ericsson's Aisle Boutiques, located in different SM malls nationwide; Smile Lanes in Sony Ericsson Experience Shops, and the official Spread the Smiles website (www.sonyeric

son.com/spread/smiles).

People who want to go the extra mile can donate both a smile and some cash. For a P20 donation, a donor will get a Digipinoy photo printout, a spot on the 50-foot Smile Wall that will display smiles collected all over the country, and a chance to win a Sony Ericsson C5 103 handset phone.

"Spread the Smiles gives us a good excuse to smile. It's Sony Ericsson's way of supporting Unicef's efforts in the Philippines," says Sony Ericsson marketing manager Daniela Lacsaga. "We're also doing this campaign in other countries in the region, but the difference here in the Philippines is the target of a million smiles."

Lacsaga is confident that the one-million-smiles target is achievable, considering the smiling nature of Filipinos and the fact that the campaign is being conducted for a very good cause.

"Even if we're not able to collect a million smiles, Sony Ericsson will still donate P1 million to Unicef, for I know that we'll hit our million smiles by June 30," he says.

The prospects of collecting a million smiles are quite bright as, on the first day of

BY 10:00 P.M.

Can you forget a place filled with good memories?

MAGNOLIA

Sunday LIFESTYLE

IN THIS ISSUE

Guess who among Manila's Who's Who are dancing the Rigodon/C3

Kenny's 12 Fresh Sandwiches
Have something good this snack time.

Kenny's Philly Cheese Steak is made of perfectly-seasoned and grilled strips of tender beef layered inside Kenny's own whole wheat roll, smothered with caramelized onions and blanketed with a layer of melted cheese.

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# Luli's passion is in Bohol

The Philippines is at the apex of the Coral Triangle, says this dedicated diver

By Pluge Enriquez
Correspondent

FOR A TIME, PAMILACAN, off Baclayon, Bohol, was best recognized to Prof. Dioglicio Evangelista Lourdes Arrogancia Rosales, a dedicated diver. Second, she frequented Balicasag, off Panglao Reef, which abounds with fish, sponges, gorgonian and hard corals.

But when Joel Uichico, general manager of Bato Environmental and Aquatic Activities for Bohol, invited Rosales to indulge in competitions and underwater photography of Balicasag, a friendship and a personal initiative ensued.

Rosales' passion for diving and her international relations background have landed her a job in Southeast Asia's policy offices of the World Wildlife Fund's Coral Triangle Program.

She likens the Coral Triangle to the scenery of the ocean. Its totality — Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands to Timor Leste, the Coral Triangle has the highest concentration of marine life and coral species in the world. Its nature consists over 600 reef-building coral species, representing 75 percent of all species known to the world.

She points out that the Philippines enjoys the advantage of being at the apex of the triangle.

**Best dive site**

Baclayon cites Bohol, particularly Balicasag, as among the world's best diving places because of its biodiversity.

"There are manta, dolphins, whales, a great number of marine life you don't see in the world. Those are the things divers pay to see in other places," she says.

Her job is to collaborate with government officials and communities in disciplined practices that help sustain the Coral Triangle's marine and coastal wealth for future generations.

"I work in the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia, trying to get people to adopt policies that will conserve marine life and make sure fishing practices are sustainable. Coastal communities can benefit from proper development of marine resources," she says.

"I find that Filipinos or Filipinos in general think that what we have in our waters are just passing through. Actually, you watch find them things in other places, and they are sprawled here."

Due to ignorance, fishermen resort to destructive fishing practices. "You destroy the marine life habitat, they go endangered it's on us."

**Off-duty**

Rosales' work in BIOLARO's Pamilacan project is done in her chronicles. Some Pan Tubol Ar and Chokoy made their presentation to the provincial government. Rosales has been espousing the need for proper tourism development.

She lauded the study among the local government officials. "The great thing was that the principal and municipal governments agreed to do it together. That was a big boost to Bohol's growth."

Rosales and her husband, former investment banker Jay Abraham Luigi Rosales, also a diver, have been flying to Bohol to support Uichico's programs. She has been donating reef ecology to such projects as dive guide training.

"Luli's presence has made great impact on our projects. She loves to help. Everything she's done is all out of passion," says Uichico.

After attending the blessing of the Municipal Tourism Center in Baclayon, the Rosales spent the week helping in the dive guide training. The program teaches guides to look for the best spots and meet the requirements of photographers who specialize in underwater images, a major target market for Pamilacan.

Rosales, who says she's only an amateur in underwater photography, gives her husband special the guides.

"Divers were not brought to Pamilacan. It's just a secret place," she says. The people who bring divers there are not fishermen but from Abaa Resorts. It's great that the locals are multi-owner of the richness of their marine life and how to manage them. The money goes directly to their and they appreciate what they have," she says.

**Catalyst**

Rosales leads BIOLARO's vision of being a catalyst for government leadership and partnerships with local communities to protect the ecosystems.

"Working with the community is the right way to do things. It's not somebody coming in and telling people what to do. It's empowering with them to make sure what the community wants is translated into something that will last for generations," she says.

Baclayon's vice mayor Marilyn Uy agrees. The local government had formed an information.

"Before, you could not be proud to say you're from Bohol. There was only the 30-minute land tour of the Baclayon Church and museum. Now we are developing many activities so that guests can stay in Baclayon for three days," says Uy.

"We're finally on the tourist radar."

LULI RIVAMAR "...aim is to develop partnerships between the governments and various sectors and empower local communities.

PAMILACAN'S waters are rich in unique marine life.

PINAKAMAHABANG SAUSAGE

PARA ARAW-ARAW PARANG FIESTA!

# Bea Zobel Jr. and Ben Chan join hands to help Bohol

By Pluyo C. Enriquez
Correspondent

CALL IT DIVINE PROVIDENCE. IN a cafeteria in Bucharest, Bohol, philanthropist Beatriz Ysmena Zobel de Ayala Jr. was talking shop with diver businessman Joel Uichico when her mobile phone rang.

Ben Chan, chairman of Bayan Corp., was calling to make a pledge after reading an article on her civic work in Bohol. He offered to donate part of the sales from Bayan's Green Tee, a line of T-shirts dedicated to environment causes, for the conservation of the tourism information center in Bucharest's wharf.

Zobel's link with Bohol began with an exhibit of the province's treasures at Metropolitan Museum, where she was board member and culture teacher. Ysmena no Blanda was then treasurer bond. The ties were strengthened when Mayor and Zobel urged the local government to spare the ancestral homes in Bucharest from demolition.

The houses were then converted into tourist lodgings, which were eventually given accreditations by the Tourism department. In the ten years, Bucharest has gone from a ninth-class municipality to third-class, owing to its increased income from tourism.

To lure more visitors, make them stay longer and generate more revenues for the town, Uichico suggested developing Danicalan island, off Bucharest. Diving tourism could be added to the dolphin and whale-watching tours.

### Livelihood alternatives

Bayo Recreational and Aquatic Activities for Bohol (Bradbo), with Zobel as chairperson and Uichico as GM and board director, worked with Barangay officials and Ayala Foundation to establish alcohol-medium program to benefit the community.

Fishermen were given alternatives to depressive fishing and hunting for mantis rays to save marine life in the area. Their wives were taught livelihood skills such as massage training for spa services and food preparations for catering. The small fishing boats were upgraded into bigger and safer motorized vessels.

Last week, Chan, with Bradbo endorsers Richard and Lucy Gomez and John Prats, graced the inauguration of the Municipal Tourism Center, the hub of tourism activities in Bucharest. Bradbo opened over the 65 million building to the Bucharest LGU (local government unit).

### Responsible eco-tours

Aside from coordinating tourism enterprises in Bucharest, the Municipal Tourism Center aims to safeguard the environment. For instance, divers bound for Bucharest must register, pay a fee and watch a video on the island's attractions and rules to protect them.

Uichico said that in other destinations, visitors are not briefed about the environment, so they end up destroying the place by littering or pinching corals.

In Bucharest, new boats and trained tourist and dive guides are government accredited. Vessels have life vests and safety equipment, and passengers are insured for a certain amount.

Bradbo, Ayala Foundation and the local government have identified three dive sites in the waters of Panglaoan, now on tourist maps. Zobel added that when Panglaoan became a marine sanctuary, the underwater life flourished.

Bohol's Lolos rives, famous for its singing cruises, she said, takes in P12 million a year. However, unremodelled tourist traffic and construction along the river are threatening the banks. From the Senate of Lolos, the eco-tourism program in Panglaoan emphasizes education, awareness and managed practices.

### Striking a balance

Chan said Zobel's memorable development projects in Bucharest blended with Green Tee's vision.

He lauded Bradbo's efforts to strike a balance between tourists and livelihood opportunities for the fishermen who depend on natural resources.

Beach's involvement in environment preservation began in the '90s when it produced T-shirts that lasted for saving the sea turtle in Cebu's, Palawan's.

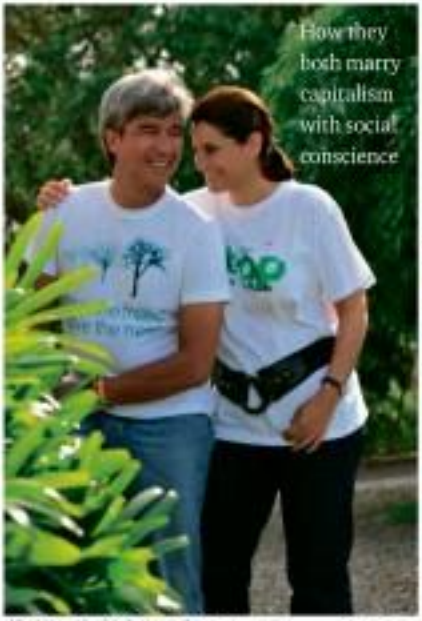
### Brand integrity

Like Zobel, Chan has also managed to marry capitalism with social conscience. Consumers weigh their concerns between expenditure and social responsibility, he said. They rely on the brand's integrity and respect environmentally responsible products. Bench's Green Tees bear messages on protecting nature, recycling, avoiding wastage, and even going vegetarian.

"We wanted to produce merchandise that you'll feel good about when you buy because you're helping the community. It's good karma. To make them saleable, yes, must come up with nice designs. We tell them that part of the sales will go to a very good cause. The consumer appreciates this especially in times of crisis," said Chan.

Asked what drives him to extend a hand, Chan replied that the psyche to come in the biggest reward.

"By giving, you are able to help. What is said is when the beneficiary can't reciprocate, like as long as they need our help, we're here... if we can afford it."



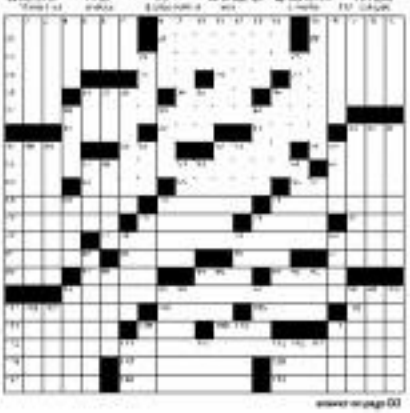

JOEL Uichico and Bea Zobel's drive to plea for nature conservation.

MONICA Zobel de Ayala's T-shirt says "Save the Planet" while Alexa Uichico's shirt warns "Over population, Pollution."

BEN CHAN, with the beautiful Bradbo brother Carlos, has been involved in Bohol projects such as putting lights along Loboc River and reviving the Loboc Children's Choir on foreign tours.

## Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD By Fred A. Longo — STAR-CRAZY



answer on page D3

## Ronald McDonald House Charities Commits to Zero Non-readers in Public Schools

The Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) with its banner program Bright Minds Read (BMR) celebrated celebrates with its first batch of elementary graduates. BMR, with its mission to eradicate illiteracy and champion beginning reading among public school children started in 2002 with 14 pilot schools and 3,300 Grade 1 pupils in NCR. RMHC partnered with the Department of Education (DepEd) to push BMR in public schools nationwide through reading toolkits and curricula. With the end of school year 2008-2009, the Grade 1 pupils that started the program have graduated elementary.

Through the years, BMR has recorded a significant contribution in the decreased number of non-readers. Based on the 2002 Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI), 40% are non-readers after Grade 1 while at the end of the school year, PHIL-IRI Pre-Test and Post-test results indicated that only 1.67% of the total NCR elementary population are non-readers.

In celebration of this remarkable development, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was presented with the first BMR valedictorian and salutatorian graduates of the 14 BMR pilot schools in NCR. Kenneth S. Yang, President of RMHC declared, "We are confident that through a consistent and focused program like BMR, we can achieve zero non-readers in our country. We at RMHC and DepEd will continue our commitments and further expand the reach of the BMR program."

CCP PRESIDENT Nestor Jardin and Reza Prieto-Valdes in last year's Rigodon de Honor

RIGODON DE HONOR at Malacañang in the early years

# Who among the Who's Who are dancing the Rigodon

## GMA revives a glorious Independence Day tradition

A SCENE from last year's Rigodon de Honor

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO herself has handpicked the 40 men and women who will dance the Independence Day Rigodon de Honor on June 12 at Malacañang Palace.

It's an interesting mix of people who cut across ages, from the industrialist's wife Linda Zobel, the outspoken Willi Tesoro, serial classicism Dina Arroyo Tanseco, artist Israfelito Cruz, beauty queen Miriam Quiambao to socialite-entrepreneur Francie Ancheta.

This is the 111th anniversary celebration of Philippine independence.

It was last year, on June 12, that the President revived this elegant ceremonial dance that dates back to the Spanish era.

In performance on Philippines Independence Day is a Malacañang tradition started by American Gen. Gen. William H. Taft. It was discontinued in the era of President Cory Aquino when the tradition may have been considered frivolous and extravagant.

The Rigodon traces its history to France. According to the Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of Art, the dance was introduced in the court of King Louis XIII by a dazzling master named Rigaut and became known as Rigaudon. In Britain, it was called Rigadoon.

The dance came to Manila in the 19th century where it was called Rigodon. Danced to lively orchestra music, it is usually performed at state functions, with government officials and members of civil society garbed in native formal attire.

The publication of the third National Folk Dance Workshop in 1981 described the Rigodon as "an inclusive dance wherein partners stand side by side with ladies usually and almost always on the right side. The dancers are arranged in a square formation, and pairs, from four to any number of even pairs may take part. The head pairs are called cabezeros while the side pairs are referred to as escuadra."

In Nick Joaquin's book, "Trilogy de Malacañang: 200 Years of a Ruling House," published by the Society for the Preservation of Philippine Culture (2002), the author recounts the ball Governor General and Mrs. Teddy Roosevelt gave in honor of the House and the Senate. "The honors of the function," writes Joaquin, "was the classical rigodon de honor, danced by 32 pairs, with Governor and Mrs. Roosevelt leading the band and the rear end, respectively, of the dance formation. The Governor General had Miss Quezon as partner, while Major General Leonard E. Booth paired off with Mrs. Sarmiento de las Alas. The band of the dance formation was completed by Acting Speaker Antonio de las Alas and Mrs. Ewing E. Booth. Although dancing the rigodon for the first time, the Roosevelts seemed entirely at home in its complexities. The First Lady led Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. for partner."

In Joaquin's book on the history of the Palace, First Daughter Ruby Kneat remembers her parents President Manuel A. Roxas and First Lady Trining de Leon leading the Rigodon de Honor at the Grand Ball on Independence Day of 1946 at the Palace. "There was a near silence and General MacArthur was among those present. And they danced the traditional rigodon: my father and mother, and US Ambassador and Mrs. Bisbee, and Vice President Quirino—her son, [Elizalde, Vicky Quirino she said I won the young one," (Joaquin, 2002).

For this year's Philippine Independence Day reception at the Palace, dancing the rigodon are Vivian Tan, Lizzie Zobel, Joanne Andrada, Becky Garcia, Belinda Adore, Nikki Tesoro, Julie Deleuze, Dina Arroyo Tanseco, Raissa Arranz, Mimi Aquino, Jeanette C. Aberegas, Lissa Ramada, Carol Quimson, Chiqui Ilas Pons, Sandrine Cruz, Precious Lara Quiguman, Miriam Quiambao, Francie Ancheta, Tikka Santos Zuriel, Georgina Gee Jade Rilloa, Rea Hong Revilla, Secretary Ralph Recto, Ambassador Luis Artiz, Ambassador Raul Rodolfo, Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, Rep. Trikka Romualdez, Rep. Dong Gonzalez, Quezon Gov. Tim Cruz, Leyte Gov. Jerome Petilla, Gov. Michael Keon, Bernard Sing, Boboi Romualdez, Atom Henares, Anton Lagdameo, Gov. A. Yeng, Gen. H. Abaya, Gabby Claudio, Ali Ancheta, Bobby Carcasona and Raul Montesa.

The Rigodon de Honor, CCP president Nestor D. Jardin said, is a beautiful tradition. Jardin, who joined the Independence Day Rigodon de Honor last year, said: "Its revival was successful and truly meaningful. As a former dance artist, I am happy that President Arroyo has taken it upon herself to revive this dance tradition." Michelle T. Laguda, Contributor

# Palawan gears up for Baragatan

PUERTO PRINCESA, Palawan, the multi-awarded ready destination and all those who have come to love the country's last ecology frontier, started June 1 with the opening of the month-long trade and food fairs.

Grand opening is on June 15, with colorful events running up to June 21, the 105th founding anniversary of the provincial government of Palawan.

Baragatan in Palawan 2009 highlights Cuyonon art and culture. A special Cuyonon day is June 16, with events featuring Cuyonon culinary delicacies, Kulang Manunggul, Cuyo musicians, songs, poetry and dances like Cuyonon Night, and CF Rock '09, a Cuyonon rock competition of original Cuyonon lyrics and tunes.

Basic figures known well by conducted for clients interested to know how to play the figures on Southern Plaza, a favourite Cuyonon musical instrument.

The remembering competition, from June to Dubai, will focus on the Cuyono Abaki, an original Cuyonon parasite dessert.

### Opening parade

The grand opening parade on June 15 will be a competition among provincial government officials and employees who will showcase the culture of their respective LGUs through a float parade and streetdancing led by Gov. Joel T. Reyes and Vice Gov. Dennis Primo de Leon.

The Gold Trade Fair has various agro-industry products and crafts of different municipalities.

Among the livelihood-related events are Hog and Poultry Raising Seminar, Livestock Seminar, Technology Livelihood and Development Center National Conference and Boat race from to Barangay, a two-day Jobs Fair will be held June 1-2.

For the environment, a mangrove planting activity will be held June 19 in the municipality of Aborlan to be led by the Environment and Natural Resources Office.

The Euro and Filipinas Shell Foundation Inc. (FSFI) will hold a recycling contest to promote proper waste management.

Festivities will also join the 8th Gov. Joel T. Reyes Cup Palawan Midwest Open Chess Tournament June 11-15. Reyes Run on June 21, and the Ink painting contest is on June 17.

Among the indigenous people of Palawan, Cuyonon is the predominant culture.

Originating in the island municipality of Cuyo in northern Palawan, the Cuyonons are known for their religiosity, self-discipline and highly developed community spirit. Many Cuyonons have emerged as leaders of the province.

Governor Reyes, who hails from Cuyo and speaks Cuyonon fluently, says, "We have to continue preserving and popularizing the Cuyonon culture because this is our identity and heritage and our way of remembering our pride and roots of patriotism as Palawanos."

CONTINGENT from Cuyo won third place in last year's festival.

GOV. JOEL T. Reyes, shown in last year's Baragatan

# US residential ship to visit Manila

The Royal Island of Tranquility is preparing to welcome its Philippine visitors this month's only private residential ship. Operated by US-based management company Residential SRV The World, with some 160 residents and guests on board, is due to sail through the islands' prime tourist destinations including premier beaches in Palawan. Starting June 2010 residents' cruises in Manila in November. It has 165 homes on board ranging from 30 sq m to 500 sq m. Visit www.aboard-theworld.com and www.residences.com.

## Travel Briefs

### Conference package

The Alliance at Camp Johnny has "Convince at the Peak" conference package. The promo includes two-night stay at The Manor's Super or Room on a twin sharing basis, two buffet breakfasts, lunch buffet lunch and lunch buffet dinner for only P6,500 per person. Rates are net inclusive of all taxes and charges. Valid from June 15–Sept. 30. A reasonable charge of P1,700 will apply for bookings outside the promotion period. Call 661-5434, 661-5432, Regular hotline (02) 6450000 or 6328911, e-mail salesDe@theworld.com.

### Hotel promo

Discover Mt. Makiling not more is better," banquet use meetings and food with your loved ones while looking at the mountains in Los Baños. Avail of its 2+1 Room Extravaganza. Stay for two consecutive nights at only P6,999 net/night and get the third night free. This special package is inclusive of room accommodations for two adults and two kids; daily breakfast buffet served in suite; replenished daily; and complimentary use of swimming pool. Call 8148743 loc 840-4040000.

### Treat for dads

Antonio Plaza invites all dads on Father's Day with a special buffet of roast beef steak serving. An additional treat... children with waiters special gift courtesy of Antonio Plaza. This special Father's Day lunch buffet is priced at only P670 net/person. Call 6355000, 6352764, or visit www.peninsula-manila.com.

### Triple-A resort

The Boracay Regency Beach Resort and Convention Center, the first triple-A rated resort boasts of 330 impeccably appointed rooms and majestic suites that have direct access to swimming pools, complemented with top-notch service from its accommodating staff. The resort houses Kai Sea Seafood Cafe, The Wok Cuisine, Regency Food Plaza and Mi Cielo Bar. Boracay's first and only underground beach disco bar. Call 6217234 or log onto www.boracayregency.com.

### Special rate

Discovery Suites offers local residents and Balikbayans a special reservation rate of P5,888+ for a Junior Suite. This value-laden package is inclusive of a breakfast for two; complimentary daily shampagne; parking and access to the hotel's Balance Lifestyle Fitness Club. Furthermore, guests who desire to extend their stay another night may do so for only P1,088+. A two-night package is also available for Discovery Suites' executive accommodations for only P5,888+. Call 6358088, 6358089, or e-mail reservations@discovery.com.ph.

### Cotabato day

Cotabato City celebrates its 59th anniversary with special events. On June 12 comes the opening of the Aswang Kalabaw celebrations with an Independence Day Parade. June 15 is the Mutya ng Kalabaw Pageant Night. The "Aswang Kalabaw Trade Fair where local products and delicacies are showcased, and the sports competition, for June 16 are City Hall Cakchenia Showdown and Aswang Pursangat; on June 20, the grand civic and military parade.

### Summit facilities

Summit Ridge Hotel in Tagaytay offers an uninterrupted view of Taal Volcano. Aside from its impressive conveniences, it has training, seminar, banquet and events facilities, complemented with audio, video and WiFi facilities. Summit Ridge Tagaytay is on KM 58, Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City. Call 02 2389888, 0923-4526888, or visit www.summitridgehotel.com.

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Bea Zobel Jr. and Ben Chan join hands to help Bohol /C2

Sunday LIFESTYLE

THOUGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

# How I got upstaged by Oprah—our showbiz dog

## Somehow we lost it. Why?

By Gilda Cordero-Fernando and Manuel G. Chaves
Contributors
Drawings by Gilda

TO BE sure, most Pinoy things are derivatives of imported stuff (from clothes to food to music). Why then do some rapture the marikit and some don't? After all, weren't they aspiring the same thing? Is it because the full-outs were not Western enough? Or, if one were so reexamine the premises, not Pinoy enough?

How did Charice Pempengco ever get YouTube, Ellen DeGeneres, Celine Dion, Madison Square Garden and finally Oprah? Because, whether singing English or Filipino, she sounded Pinoy. The revenge of the brat! Just as Pinoy sounding are the forever-hating Martin Nievera and Regine, Sarah Geronimo and all the stars of the Jokers Firmament. Time to accept that under all that cocoa soon it's still the Pinoy element that resurfaces.

Because we've been colonized, the balance is delicate, sometimes hilariously so (often). From competing with each national ginrals Pinoys have learned a lot. Jollibee didn't try to be American and won the burger wars. It's not the hamburger that the Pinoy was rebelling against, it was the "the American taste." So Jollibee Filipinized the hamburger. And don't forget our beloved Dimsum who but never knew anything but pure Pinoy.

Talk about Pinoys changing the color-smart equation!

PUPPY Fashionista winner Ivy Spoor, a dachshund owned by Clemiary Top Puppy Model winner Ivy Nunez, sang owned by Harold Bautista; Pink Puppy title runner to Sasa, owned by Glen Sandoval; and Puppy-panic award winner Lil Bunny, owned by Alexandra Lo & Co.

NADINE Samonte

JOANNE Quintos

BENCH couple Richard Gomez and Lucy Torres

HAPPY mom Tessa Tarras and New York-based designer Robin Tarras

HAVE designer Raja Lazrel and Philippine Fashion Week executive producer/director Joey Espino

HSBC's VP for Group Communication, Johanna Garcia and Raul Maramara

# How I got upstaged by Oprah—our showbiz dog

MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF our canines boast pets are quite amusing.

My mother is one fearful of dogs, since she was bitten as a child and had to undergo multiple tetanus shots. My father, on the other hand, loves dogs and all kinds of creatures from monkeys and snakes to iguanas and scorpions. Many times, he'd come home with a stray dog or cat and none of them is furtish.

So we were mostly human with a dislike to love animals, so when my little Asherna was old enough, we shopped around for a family dog. After weeks of scouring around Eastwood and Greenhills, my older daughter Annika settled for a white-washed of a Maltese and Yorkie Spaniel. We called him Phantom.

A few weeks after we brought Phantom, the dog shop owner called with some sort of seller's announcement. Having sold us a dachshund mixed. He was giving us a free teacup Shi Tzu. We wanted a

TALENTED designer Oliver Tolentino with his sweet Sea Princess and Pinoy Ameador

HSBC friends Jan Logan, head of Marketing Cindy Beattie and Emma Wong

VICKY de Leon, Cecilia Mamaril, Maurice Arcuelle and Lynn Fabros

HOT YOUNIE designer Rama Jimenez

PRIDUS partners Nicky and Mon Jimenez

HSBC's Ron Logan and Gabi Broadhead Corp. president David Lim

NESTLE'S Glenn Rangwani and Maria Angela Oyerbide

DESIGNING friends Jessica Tee Gan, Lois Tan-Gan, Tippi-Justine Dayanga

FOREVER free Lolly Ursabia-Moreno

Even with my oversized neon orange gown, she still got louder applause

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Puppy Fashionista, Pink Puppy and Puppy-panic.

The Top Puppy Model was Nessa, a pug owned by Harold Bautista. Celebrity judge Joanne Quintas gave Harold and Nessa the P10,000 cash prize, a trophy and a special dog tag.

Sharon Tan, SM HSBC MIP Ice Operations, made sure I had plenty to have fun with the dogs during the event using my HSBC card. The more fun still don't have an HSBC credit card, now is the perfect time to get one, to avail of its latest promos.

Promo now until the end of July on approved new card per you. Shopping off at SM Centers HSBC TV. To make it sweeter, the card is payable on installment over 24 months at zero percent interest.

HSBC promos are always great. Imagine a 22-in LCD at only P629 a month for 24 months! The Mr. Johnson LCD can also be used as a computer monitor and is durable, as it also functions as a computer monitor. And the TV can be delivered to your place.

Ron Logan of HSBC Personal Financial Services also told me that they are bringing back the Cebu Pacific promo last release program.

All these promos are part of HSBC's strategy of putting customers first, according to head of marketing Chris Rourke. HSBC has always been to supportive of my many needs, and I can't find loud enough.

## Philippine Fashion Week

The HSBC credit card would be a dangerous thing to have if it were to be accepted at Philippine Fashion Week. Luckily, most of the designers' creations were so sheer, nothing's there to hide.

The first show I watched was the homecoming of New York-based designer Robin Tarras. I met him three last year already at her Connecticut via New York (NY) mansion. He approached me and told me his stores, connections Tessa's Tessas, even when she was at a judge on "Celebrity Duets."

Flora Valenzuela and went to programming, his New York-based, understated, chic collection won just perfect. It may not have been extensive, but each design had his unique and original detail. Ang it's Internet with influences of American design.

Robin's metallic brocade, short, hand-draped shirts and tailored pants were all winners. After the show, his famous mom, Tessa, founded Nicholas Kirwan's work becoming with pride and delight.

## Promising future

Another set of proud parents, or should I say stage parents, was the agency Sassa Dagdag's Ajay, Ajay and Mona, of ad agency fame. They had personally invited me to see their daughter's newest big fashion debut.

SM KING Henry Sy with Andrew Cavaliero, Becky Garcia, Sea Princess and Alice Pinoy

SANDRA Pena, Manila IFFP and communications director, and Jay Jacobs, marketing and promotions specialist

PHILIPPINE Fashion Week executive producer Rudy Espino, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and SM designer Tsuyoki Nonoyo

Backstage goddess Mike Vea Reyna was the inspiration for Susan's holiday collection, with results as of socialites who grab. From the details of the hair and makeup had that touch of the 40s.

This young lady has quite a promising fashion design career ahead of her. Both Abby and Mon have every right to be proud stage parents.

That same day was also the fashion show of talented designer Oliver Tolentino. He has been making outfits for me for many years now. Since the time we were introduced to each other by stage actress Pinky Amador. Oliver's collection was ranked really high by the fashion police—oops, I mean jurors.

Another highly applauded designer was Michael Cinco, whose every creation featured stylish sprinkles of Swarovski crystals and touch of flowing chiffon, this pair of the entire week were designed like Chris Brid and Lee Tsiprasmaya-esque clothes. Both part of the Precious Collection.

All in all, it's great to see Philippine fashion doing so well.

Until such a good time of Fashion Week this year with fellow guests, including Imelda Marcos, and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and SM designer Tsuyoki Nonoyo.

*E-mail the author at sugarmama@inquirer.com.ph.*

# Cebu welcomes new German honorary consul

THE AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERAL Republic of Germany, Dankbar Ludwig Weber-Lortsch, came to install Dr. Franz Seidenschwarz as Germany's Honorary Consul in Cebu. The ceremony took place at the Arcade Ramirez hall of Casino Español.

Governor Gwendolyn Garcia was present. She was asked to unveil the signage with the official seal, which sees hangs at Dr. Franz's office in Banilad. Cebu City Vice Mayor Michael Rama also attended to personally congratulate Dr. Franz, his wife Elizabeth Cinco-Seidenschwarz, and their two sons—Dr. Alex and Franz Jr.

"This is a very special event," said Ambassador Weber-Lortsch. There has not been a German consulate in Cebu since 1945, and now there are over 300 German nationals residing here. They are the concerns of Dr. Franz, whose activities include business, scientific and cultural endeavors.

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Piccardi

Dr. Franz Seidenschwarz, a botanist, has lived here for 30 years

Dr. Franz Seidenschwarz is well known in the Cebu community, having resided here for almost 30 years. Being a botanist, he is most concerned about over-development, over-climb and perhaps even wood he comes across. They all have found a place in an exhaustive book he published some years back.

"This appointment is indeed an honor bestowed upon me," he said in his acceptance speech. He recalled that more than 100 years ago, there was a shipping line that linked Cebu directly with Singapore, thanks to the German firm Hoyog Gerd.

Present on that occasion was Hans Isbrandt, president and CEO of Hoyog Gerd in the Philippines. He is also the president of the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce establishment in metro city.

Leilani Echevarria was the evening's emcee. To close the program, she asked the chairman of the Consular Corps in Cebu to welcome Dr. Franz Seidenschwarz into the fold.

## French food fest

Take coffee shops at the Shangri-La in Mactan hold a 10-day French food festival. Titled "Saveurs de France," Executive chef Emmanuel Hamonou, who is French and Iran Guido Michelin stars in his name, prepared quite an array that included classical and provincial French cuisine.

Guests of honor on the occasion were Francis Honorary Consul in the Visayas, Michel Dauthier and his wife Augustin Gaston-Dauthier, who is the Grand Consul of La Chaine des Rotisseurs, the world's quintessential gourmet organization.

Raymond Hoyog, orchid fans still the general manager of the resort, was present along with his wife Annie and their daughter Ryke, having to entertain's comfort was El Presidente and Marketing manager Lesley Tan, as well as Communications manager Mildred Sanico and her assistant Carla Constantino. They introduced the new F & B director Abdul Hadi.

## Wine discoveries

Moet Hennessy hosted a press dinner behind "Discover Flavors of the World" also at the Shangri-La Mactan, this time at its Italian restaurant, Acqua. It was a pleasure to meet Pierre Hinault, the Asia's regional brand development consultant who is based in Singapore.

Master of House hands are Moet & Chandon, Dom Perignon, Veuve Clicquot, Hennessy and more.

From Manila had come Olga Arzat-ur, Chief representative of Moet Hennessy Asia Pacific, with their team in Cebu Ana Jalandoni, who came with his sister, our dear friend Lory Ashner.

Chef Giordano Broglio prepared an excellent menu, with proper wines assigned for every dish.

## Spanish March

June 30 is Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day, and Cirilan Español de Cebu has taken it as cue to select July as Spanish month. Plans are afoot to build a grand Tapas night at Inbisible Español Bellevue on July 3, with the presence of the Spanish Ambassador H.E. Luis Antonio Calvo Sotelo.

In turn, the Marco Polo Plaza Hotel in Cebu would also like to have a Spanish food festival opening July 10 and for the rest of the month's duration. Gerard Lalor Polo is their food consultant.

Spanish cuisine in Cebu has a new and excellent exponent as Jose Mercado opened his Spain's Bar and Restaurant on Rosario Street. The whitewashed restaurant is naturally an ethnic need to be the double front lawn of the mansion where José Spain's great grandmother, Mercedes Moya.

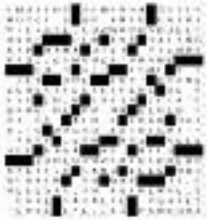
Spanish cuisine in Spain's tourist hotels. Here since the restaurant is Cebu, his grandmother was to open a place. What opportunity have been his parents, Jose Maria and Sharpy Jean Orozco Miranda, as well as his uncle Ildefonso Miranda, who, together with Vina Orquiñena, help him run the place. Younger brother Jose Miranda pitches in, too.

Run of all, the Mercados family continues to live in their stately manor within the compound. Ladies with mementos collected by grandparents Simeon and Carmen (nee Moya) Miranda. It's one of the last great houses lined in along Rosario.

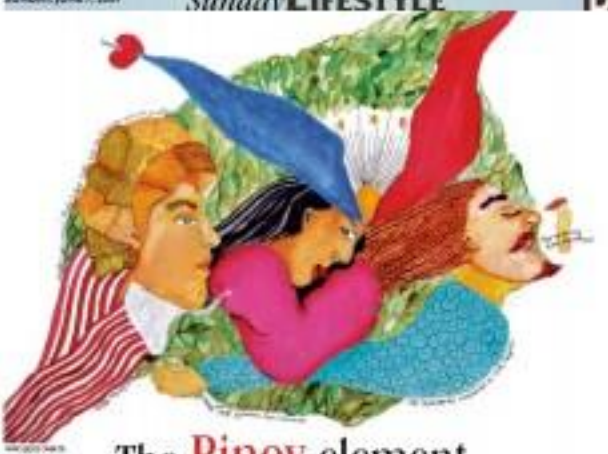
The Mercado recipes has surprised me to still opening. Bob Cordero and his family live the place. On any night, you'll find him cooked on a fire stool beside the Cheesetec, the Englishman who is in part responsible for the décor and ambiance.

Anything listed on the menu is good, but certainly competitive is the collard (mushrooms) and en to ache that that's like water de cebo. Prices are more attractive, specially for true blue Cebuanos who hurt the bulk of Jose's customers.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



DR. FRANZ Seidenschwarz and wife Elizabeth Cinco-Seidenschwarz



# The Pinoy element

ago), do say, the Pinoy member of the Black Eyed Peas, considered the song "Bebot" to their superiors with the following lyrics: "Pinoy ito, sigaw ng Pinoy magpakilala, sigaw ng Pinoy bebop ano ap makes fight, sige?"

In his dances, what shows those pretenses to Cuba dancing their hearts out to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" on Yes Eaba! What about the Pinoy dancers in Disneyland, Hong Kong, who are a bit baroque they do a rock performance, all the time, compared to Chinese dancers who move like automatons. Boxing people in their own land!

**Where does one look?**

What makes defining the Filipino so difficult? First of all, where does one look? We have no consciousness of the predecessors of our past. There is so much lifting as an everyday practice of culture, of preserving our old structures and of bridges our roots.

Here does one, for instance, promote a bahay-kubo-inspired house or classic when we have no knowledge or support for building that native tool? There's not enough bamboo today to harvest...not enough technology to preserve it...plus the carpenters have forgotten how to handle bamboo! Really. It's never experien to make a bahay-kubo from scratch! bones.

But only do we have to struggle to promote our roots, we have to dig for them! In the '50s, Pinoy culture wasn't so elusive, you could still define it. There were modern food and screen flower decorations at Loanna Greenbottom and Modacinking. People took to Filipino folk songs as supportive bedtime dancing just as readily as to the Italian. No one equated local with hokey. Ice culture vultures dance over the Metropolitan Theater and the original Manila Grand Opera House.

Could it be because there were people in power who believed in things Pinoy? Marcos L. Quezon advocated NIDA, all things native. During the Japanese time, when everything American was banned, being Filipino was deeply oppressive because we were forced to make the things we used. The bolyo became the antiquated dictionary. (Some pieces are on exhibit at Yoshuaglen Museum). We created beggar shows as popular that people queued up for every showing. After Liberation we reverted to the old mimicable mentality.

One story in Victor Israela Mazo on the downed pilot tries but not be her artistic vision for the Filipino...She wore the aqua bonut Bulig and presented it. She suppported prodigies who ended up international soldiers. She established the OPM awards, the National Artist awards, and of course, the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Her conception we, for it. People who could make a difference got stuck in proving the Pinoy was "just as good as the rest." The foreign framework is, as ever, the salvation for Filipino excellence.

And the framework has been there for ages. Even the accolades for our patriot painter Juan Luna were for being "just as good as the Spaniard." In countless versions, Rosang Francisco learned the redundancies of the Western condition, painted like a Pinoy, and was lauded the Inang Pinoy.

The other framework that Filipinos have long began to accept is that a country can succeed only if it is technologically advanced. According to whom? Will the Philippines really finds its way if we didn't have the latest computer? Globalization is the takeover boon of cultural imperialism.

## A Unique Cultural Performance At SM MOA

Striving to promote the Philippines' heartwarming diverse culture, SM Mall of Asia in cooperation with the Department of Tourism kicks off its Independence Day 2009 celebrations with Pasaya-hang 2009, a set of cultural performances that invites audiences to the colorful and delightful artistic heritage of Northern Mindanao. Watch the award-winning Bagong Dimension Cultural Dance Troupe and Camiguin Cultural Performers as they present indigenous dances that make their culture interestingly unique.

A perfect venue to celebrate cultural events, SM Mall of Asia has an exciting lot of events that will surely make you beam with Pinoy pride. The proud symbol of our country, the Philippine flag, will be raised as Bituin Escalante sings the National Anthem on Independence Day itself. Pasaya-ng Pilipinas, a celebration of Philippine culture, music, and dance. To top off the festivities splendidly, there will be a spectacular fireworks display and freelance performances at San Miguel by the Bay.

Come enjoy Independence Day 2009 with us at SM Mall of Asia and experience a mall like no other!

Rediscover the NORTH

Witness A Procession Like No Other!

Agung Iru Fluvial Festival
(June 7th - SM, Agusi, Pangasinan)

Colorful barcas and decorated motorboats will up and down the Pangasinan River carrying the image of Apung Iru Ola, Patron during this 3 - day event as thanksgiving for the miracles the said landmark upon the town.

For our country to move forward, we need to boost investments by supporting local tourism.
And there's no better place to start than at the North.

Manny V. Pangilinan
Chairman

NORTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY

PLDT SMART

# Tzu Chi Foundation teaches love and hope

IT WAS A HEARTFELT EXPERIENCE. Totally different from the usual parties we used to attend. At the sprawling yard of David and Judy Gan in Green Meadows SE, huge assemblies of the Tzu Chi Foundation sang the "sutras". It is similar to the chanting that meditators sing to keep themselves focused and centered. As I listened and swayed on side to side, I felt a certain peace.

Maricris Sicangco told me much later that there was calmness radiating from the members who were in their blue Tzuchis and white pants. They were always smiling to the guests that included Imelda Timbol, PR practitioner Nancy Morfil, who came with her family, husband and their daughter; Mona Ann Garde, Elisa Tu, Nancy Reyes and Bobby Lucero; and architect Jun Palafox, who designed the schools for girls to live so as to place the ones destroyed by the earthquake on Dec. 26, 2003.

The occasion was a welcome dinner for Israeli singer and composer David Dfir who was in town to give concerts in three places, including the Araneta Coliseum. Referring to the teachings of Dharma Master Cheng Yen, founder of Tzu Chi Foundation, David said, "Today (May 28) found is celebrating the anniversary when Buddha received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai. It only we could obey all the Ten Commandments, there would be no hating, killings, cursing the neighbor's wife..."

Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded the some, but she is here companion for the poor by giving them relief. "Tzu" means compassion, while "chi" means relief, a term in Buddhism sun, the Master founded the Tzu Chi Foundation in 1966 in Hualien, Taiwan. Its members number 4.5 million all over the world; 8,000 to Manila, Cebu and Zamboanga.

The main thrust of the Master's teachings comes down to three statements: "There is no one in the world who I do not love, there is no one in the world who I do not trust, and there is no one in the world who I do not forgive. Coupled with these tenets is compassion to help the poor who are confronted with disasters of every kind. When time suffered a massive earthquake, Tzu Chi Foundation asked Filipino architect Jun Palafox to design five school buildings for girls. Palafox called it an "embarrassment of humanity."

**Walking limbs in Zamboanga**

Dr. Annie Sim, a retired dentist in Zamboanga City and a Catholic, related how Tzu Chi has helped disabled people by donating to them artificial legs. The poor who needed to have their amputees removed were also given help for everything that Tzu Chi Foundation has done for humanity all over the world. Dr. Sim also was given the Human Magnitude award for humanity and handicaps in 1998.

*For more info on the Tzu Chi Foundation, text Judy at 09178120882.*

**Diane Sin. Nite**

To celebrate the 80th centenary of the arrival of Fray Urdaneta in Cebu, and the 25th anniversary of the canonized erection of the Basilica del Sto. Niño de Cebu, "The Diane Sin. Nite" took place in the Roxas islands of Bilan-Bilan-gan, Malapascua and mainland Daan Lusac-San Vite 25 to 28. "Diane", which means to climb, brought the pilgrim image of the Sto. Niño to these islands. Leading the visitors was the Basilica rector Fr. Rudy Rupisa, OSA.

The visit is part of the Translated Island Project (TIP) or "Sacrificing Living Presence" founded by Fr. Tito Trapsilio. Another project of the Basilica is the HIV Hijo Songsorning Contest, the proceeds of which went to the Sto. Niño Children's Welfare Foundation.

The Diane Sin. Nite prayer makes people aware of the story tale of their environment. A visual presentation of the prior state of Jesuspen Double Barrier Reef due to illegal fishing was shown. Diaspen Double Barrier Reef is located off northern Bohol.

COMMODORE Ambrosio Tronpont, Myther Belog, Mayor Edward Hagedorn of Palawan

SEN. MOS Zubiri and Bro. Pujol GREGGY Zuasola

# Myther and Friends celebrate 60

By Larry Levinio
Lifestyle Editor

IN THE LATE '70S, M. ARMANDO WAS known as Gourmet St. Frederick's epicurean was Makati. Fashion stalwarts Rudy Palattao, Rusty Lopez, Lourdes Quisumbing, Ramon Santiago, Christian Espiritu, Ben Barrales and this writer had gastronomic hang-outhere, in between, prospered little boutiques and tailoring shops.

One Myther Belog had a popular men's tailoring shop that also rented out ready-to-wear linings and blazers, called "Mother and Friends" His home goes to what his clients included people of all media, politics, PR practitioners, lawyer, even show biz icons.

Now the lady of three daughters TV Gay, media and society knows by their single first names such as Ann, Kris, Pacheco, Trending, Cheryl, and Gregg began to meet every Thursday for lunch at Mother's. His retro menu character with Asian, cooked delicious Filipino meals like no other.

It became like a gentlemen's club in London, where the very busiest have privacy, discuss the real stories behind the news and the few matters of interest in government or society with simple rules: It would be in a civilized businessmen meeting of the minds and all tactics information was off the record. This cabal of friends has been doing this Thursday ritual for 30 years now.

Last week, Myther's friends, both mighty and low-key, flocked to Manila Yacht Club

FOO HOLD Ramaldes behind Nino Cuiler-Olivares

JUSTICE Raul Vinzons, Roger Salazar, Charito Planas and Mayor Powers Trinidad

Julie Vega-Diaza


WORLD-CLASS
ENTERTAINMENT
AT SM MEGAMALL

Since SM Megamall first opened its doors on June 28, 1991, it has been wowing customers with its impressive options for non-stop shopping, dining and entertainment.

SM Megamall is packed with hundreds of stores of both local and foreign brands, as well as a food court, restaurants and cafes that cater to practically every craving. It is also a mall renowned for the world-class events it holds, in everything from trade fairs and fashion shows, to international sporting events and concerts.

KEVIN LITTAU

And sometimes, the stars get the chance to enjoy SM Megamall the way the rest of us do: by shopping! Just ask American Idol Season 7 winner David Cook who was in town for a mall-day concert. He dropped by on the eve of his show with Kamemeworld savoring his visit to Kultura Filipina, The Gap, Lacoste, Springfield and Marlboro Classics. David enjoyed shopping for Filipino souvenirs and some clothes, before calling it a night with a cool treat from Haagen Dazs.

The mall has also turned its newest area, the Mega Atrium, into a concert hall, featuring some of the most notable acts in the country and throughout the globe. Just recently, legendary Jazz diva Kevyn Littau performed songs from her new album, "What's Enough," and unique renditions of jazz standards and contemporary hits.

In the realm of sports, Mega Trade Hall at SM Megamall played host to the Philippine Open Pool Championship. The competition saw over 80 players from around the world vie for the top spot. In the end, Indonesian Rikky Yang took home the US$10,000 prize, beating Filipino runner-up Jeff de Luna, and beating even world's no. 1 Ralf Souquet and world 10-ball champion Darren Appleton. Among the Filipino players competing were Dennisorteneo Pascua, Marlon Manalo and Antonio Gabica.

PHILIPPINE OPEN POOL CHAMPIONSHIP

Truly a venue for world-class events, SM Megamall will continue to define the leading culture in the Philippines as it also makes Manila becoming the ultimate destination for shopping, dining and entertainment.

SPRINGFIELD Kultura MEGAMALL Endless shopping. Endless Discoveries.

Editor Ermie G. Velarde

# ENTERTAINMENT

## 'Kinatay' screening June 12

By Jayson B. Rimando
Contributor

WE ALL KNOW ABOUT THE INDIE... genre award, now it's time to see the film.

ON SPOTS of his lawsuit vis-à-filed against a top network exec, Annabelle Rama's fourth, Heart Evangelista and JC de Vera, get full support from GMA 7. Story on page F4.

# Lolit denies talk: Kho not KC's type

By Marinel R. Cruz

"NO, IT'S NOT HER."

Emphatic statement tonight the opinions of TV host Lolit Solis on Friday about rumors of a new relation allegedly featuring young superstar KC Concepcion with controversial comedian-host Jinkee Kho.

Solis swiftly and emphatically dismissed it as nothing more than conjecture. "People merely put two and two together," shrugged Solis. Kho's former talent manager Ibo and Concepcion and Kho met at the Embassy Bar in The Fort, Taguig and "they were often seen talking there."

Solis is the current publicist of actress Kristine Hidalgo, who has filed a complaint with the National Bureau of Investigation against Kho, her former boyfriend, claiming that he recorded their sexual encounters without her consent.

In an unverified report, Kho is also said to have recorded, using his mobile phone, Concepcion getting dressed.

Until words, the report took on a life of its own. Let alone rumbus whispers, but acquaintances discussed a "third party" about a young superstar known for a global advocacy in one such kind of video. With Hayden Kho.

The whole matrimonial jumped to a conclusion but Solis remained unconvinced. For several reasons, Solis said in a phone interview, among them, "Hayden's not KC's type. To multiply as people [see]."

She reminded people to focus on the issue: "Hayden abused Katrina and other women in his sex videos. He has to be punished. When that is settled, we can then crucify the people who uploaded the videos on the Net and those who supplied drugs to Hayden."

(Related story in Bandits, F4)

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## 'Kinatay' screening . . .

From page 6

Local cinephiles can finally watch Brillante Mendoza's controversial "Kinatay (The Execution of Evil)" in the ongoing 14th French Film Festival in Manila, by way of marking the filmmaker's first directorial win at the last Cannes Film Festival.

The film, which drew both raves and static from critics, will be screened June 12 at the Shangri-La Plaza Cineplex as part of the "Tribute to Philippine Cinema."

Mendoza, who also polarized critics last year with his first Cannes entry "Serbis," is the first Filipino to take the coveted prize.

"Kinatay" will be joined in the special tribute by four other films honored in different screens of the Cannes fest: "Manila" by Adolfo Alix Jr. and Raya Martin; "Sakaragem" by Junico Henri, and "Manang Biring" by Alain Mabanlag and Miguel Orosa.

Also scheduled is a sneak preview of Marilou's "Babaeng Hinubdan," which screened sometime from the French government through the French Soul One, a grant offered by the French Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

The French Film Festival in Manila, an annual event organized by the French Embassy in the Philippines, Cultureforce, and Alliance Francaise de Manille, is likewise focusing on its June 3-14 run a retrospective of 10 French films previously presented in Cannes.

Among those in "A Year in Italy," a gripping, dis-orientalized caper in stark black and white that chronicles the experiences of a 16-year-old girl whose fellow Chemning pairs out to be a thief and murderer.

The other movies "Un Bruit," directed by Claire Simon, the story of an adolescent girl who has an affair with a 35-year-old married man.

"La Pianiste," by Michael Haneke, about a 40-year-old pianist another whose cloistered upbringing leads her to become a voyeur and a masochist.

"Home," shot entirely from the sky in high definition, by famous French photographer Yann Arthus Bertrand, as results in a stunning documentary on the beauty of our planet and an alarming reminder of the dangers it faces.

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"Un Secret," told through the eyes of an only child who remains an imaginary brother, a story of passions and clashing family secrets.

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4 DRAG ME TO HELL
5 ANGELS & DEMONS
6 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
7 FROM WITHIN / HOUSE
8 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER
9 Invisible: BABY ANGELO
10 DALAW

## ERMITA

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 FROM WITHIN
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6 DALAW
7 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER

## METRO EAST

1 FROM WITHIN
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
4 DRAG ME TO HELL
5 DALAW
6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
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8 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER

## NOVALICHES

1 DALAW
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 DRAG ME TO HELL
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2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

## CASMARINAS

1 DED NA SI LOLO
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 DRAG ME TO HELL
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2

## IMUS

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 DRAG ME TO HELL
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

## STARMILLS

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 GHOSTS of GIRLFRIEND'S PAST
3 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
4 ANGELS & DEMONS
5 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
6 DRAG ME TO HELL

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6 ANGELS & DEMONS

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# Scandal beats reality TV 'moro-moro'

By the Entertainment staff

THERE'S A DISTURBING rumor that Lead Star in a major scandal received P4 million to participate in a raging moro-moro—a rather nasty affair that makes reality TV shows look like a firecracker.

Another Major Player is reportedly willing to part with at least an P1 billion to save Sebuguero Colleagues's face.

**Sex video hysteria**

If you thought public fascination for the Hayden Kho-Katrina Halili sex video couldn't be topped, think again. New names are being dragged into the fray.

Latest victim is AC Concepcion who is abroad and cannot defend herself. AC's involvement seems to have been sparked by an on-air rumor between two radio hosts.

Details from all camps came swiftly and furiously—most notably from Lolit Solis, who claims to have seen all of Hayden Kho's videos.

Lolit insists that AC is involved—and a sex scandal at any point and that people just surmised she's somehow involved just because she's a friend of Tita Boy's, Hayden Kho's fellow contestant on 'Celebrity Duets' two years ago.

But this form a source closer to AC: 'No way! And anyone such as that one should never even be dignified with a statement. Please don't quote me."

Got that.

At press time, more names are being added to the scandal, including a sex strike and a concert performer. And a gay TV host.

Ay, mercy!

What's to be learned from this — this spline which hasn't?

A media-savvy politico of stir that the Philippine government should have handled the Hayden-Katrina controversy the way Hong Kong authorities dealt with the fallout. There are video scandal—discreetly.

"Hong Kong police quietly investigated the matter and the perpetrators were caught. Also, Chen

**RUSHES SUNDAY**

**MISTER AND MOTE** in the 28-8 national elections! Tina Kambaare's Jay Contreras (R), Pandayo Nilalger's Chito Miranda and R&B star Luke Mejares (L) urged the audience in "Rock the Vote"—a production of the advocacy group Register and Vote—recently staged in Bgy. Tatalon, Lez Pilus. The show will soon tour other major cities.


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**Sordid tackles**

Together and after years of struggle, Comic Uno achieved considerable success. But the price of fame seems to be ... messy.

There's a persistent rumor that the two—totaled fans each other's guts now. A source alleges that, during a shoot, CZI refused to scrub his BBA to CHI.

Yeah, that bad.

**Bitter ball**

Speaking of bitter fallout, there's talk that Mariner Idol is unraveling with Former Sweetheart.

Quite naturally, MI is only too happy to fan the flames of controversy. But as far as PA is concerned, a reunion is far-fetched. In fact, PA thinks MI is a fake—as he's a diabetic!

At a recent gathering, PA wondered loud about certain people who suddenly acquired a foreign-sounding twang—obviously alluding to MI's unfamiliar American accent.

**Triple whammy**

It comes in threes for Kapuso talents. After the sex video scandal involving Katrina Halili and the revised Salamatawesome case of Sunshine Sordi (against Baron Geisler) comes an "area of investigation" still dogged by a teenaged girl against Aljur Abrenica.

A network insider told Bushes that GMA-7 is seriously looking into the matter.

In the meantime, Jane Ambassador, Aljur's lawyer, has released a statement, which reads in part: "The controversy... appears to be a case of misunderstanding... Aljur is extremely careful in his dealings with fans, always upholding the highest standards in genuinely believes... as instilled in him by his parents and further honed by his home studies."

**Mixed X**

According to southbuzz, Cristine Reyes replaced Arlene "Bearcat" Muñoz. Robbie Bonilla as the lead in the remake of the 1980 Vilma Santos sexy movie, "Mix X."

Sought for comment, Bonilla's camp insisted that production company Octoberx hasn't released dates of the latest development.

**Criss-crossing Cristine**

Now, there's talk that Cristine Reyes is leaving ABS-CBN and moving back to GMA-7.

A Kapuso insider told Bushes that the rumor is indeed making the rounds, but that the sexy-world's Asian Queen isn't part of the brewing deal...if there's any at all.

Ara Mina claimed that she's clueless about Cristine's plans.

Officially, though, Cristine hasn't categorically denied the gossip. A source believes Cristine's camp is waiting for a counter-offer from ABS-CBN.

Until further notice.

**Wrong sizzle!**

Gorgeous Celebrity is allegedly the reason that Handsome Actor broke up with New-Showbiz Girl.

Funny thing is, according to a circle, GCG Younger Brother is the culprit. Nope, Mystikal's actual MSG. It's HA, who's supposedly "clean" to YB.

Uh-oh.

**Resourceful?**

Ex-lover describes Scandal Hunter as a resourceful starter. But SH was spotted in Rockwell, walking without a care in the world. When passersby gawked, SH resorted to them—and validating her boyfriend. Asked by a friend if sex-tasing is enjoyable, SH smiled suggestively.

**Happy birthdays!**

Today: Yen Jones is 60. Liam Neeson is 57. William Forsythe is 54. Dave Navarro is 42.

Yesterday: Joan Rivers is 76. James Darren is 73. Ben Aleggo is 55. Sonia Braga is 59. Nick Rhodes is 47. Dan Fortenberry is 42. Kenya Moi is 32.

June 9: Cultural feminist Jan Paul is 94. Michael J. Fox is 48. Johnny Depp is 46. Natalie Portman is 28.

June 10: Atomic Trippledown is 65. Elizabeth Hurley is 44.

June 11: Gene Pitkins is 76. Hugh Laurie is 50. Shia Lebeouf is 23.

* * *

**Top of the tabloids**

*The top three hit stories in PH tabloid Bandera this week. (And why we are stoned, if we are moved.)*

•**Gerald Anderson** bonding personally puts top Kim Chiu. [Fantasy-to-reality.]

•Kim suggests up Sonia. [Envy.]

•Dodi Aris Santos: Guilt-ing makeouts. [About time.]

•Agot Isidro hired to streaming matinees. [No more time?]

•Rissa Evangelista: Active suing couple-boyfriend? [Like some time.]

•Angelica Panganiban hits Kristine Hermosa; bites about a Derek Ramsay. [Kicking b.]

•Ellen Adarna: Pangalan mouthpiece or Lucy Torres. [Or a Jinky Pacquiao?]

E-mail: nuhs@inquirer.com.ph

# ENTERTAINMENT

*Sex videos hit the fan with virulent force* / **Viewfinder** Page F2

## CHICKENJOY: all-time favorite treat

Ask any Filipino what makes bonding moments extra special and, chances are, he or she will mention the presence of family and their favorite food. Indeed, sharing good food has always been a Pinoy tradition that enriches every dining experience with the people who matter most.

And through the years, Jollibee Chickenjoy has made quite an impression during such gatherings. It has become after all an all-time favorite that has been pleasing the palates of generations of Filipinos.

What makes Jollibee Chickenjoy such a classic that many claim to be the best-tasting chicken in town? It all begins with the longkop-sarap aroma-so distinct, mouth-watering and army-delicious that you notice it instantaneously. It invites you in the minute you pass by any Jollibee store. And then there is the juicy-licious meat, tender, moist and cooked to perfection. For many, the best part comes last, the golden-brown skin that is truly crispylicious. Smother all this in the hot and rich gravylicious sauce and your mouth experiences a heavenly burst of flavors.

That's why it is the treat of choice of families especially the kids. Filipino kids would love to get their eager hands on Jollibee Chickenjoy any time of the day. Serve a piece or two to your children, younger sibling or pamangkin and you can see their little eyes brighten up with every oophoric bite.

On weekends, family get-togethers are never complete without a trip to Jollibee. It's all because of the Chickenjoy experience that no member of the family can resist. "Para sa amin, Chickenjoy ang the best!" they all say from the bottom of their very satisfied stomachs.

The same is true of barkada bonding moments, whether on a road trip adventure or when simply hanging out, each get-together is made even more fun and exciting with a basket of Chickenjoy to share.

All these are part of the inimitable Chickenjoy experience that keeps the young and young-at-heart coming back to Jollibee. Then and now, Filipino families and friends can be sure to look forward to that same crispylicious, juicylicious, army-delicious and gravylicious treat at Jollibee to make those moments extra-special.

CHEER FACTOR

## Eminem admits Bruno encounter was a stunt

NEW YORK—EMINEM HAS COME CLEAN, saying that he knows what was in store when hare-brained comedian Sacha Baron Cohen crash-landed on him at the MTV Movie Awards television broadcast Sunday.

Eminem stormed out of the awards ceremony after Cohen, in the role of the male character from his new movie, "Bruno," landed on his lap after a flying stuntup, leaving the rap/emcee wondering if the pair really were furious or if it was a stunt.

On Wednesday, one of the writers in the awards show admitted that Cohen's act was a rehearsed stunt.

Reuters

EMINEM and Sacha Baron Cohen in Bruno


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9:50

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2:30 | 4:30
7:30 | 9:30

TERMINATOR SALVATION
1:30 | 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:00

ANGELS & DEMONS
1:10 | 4:00
6:50 | 9:40

DESTINY FOREVER
2:00 | 4:50
7:00 | 9:50

FROST/NIXON
1:50 | 5:00
8:00 | 7:50 | 9:40

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
1:20 | 4:00 | 6:30 | 9:00

ANGELS & DEMONS
12:00 | 2:00 | 8:00 | 8:00

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
12:00 | 2:20 | 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20

DAYLIGHT
1:30 | 3:30 | 5:30 | 7:30 | 9:30

PLATINUM CINEMA
TERMINATOR SALVATION
2:30 | 6:20
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9:50

DRAG ME TO HELL
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# Sex vide

AS EVERYBODY AND HER TIA GUI-vienda must know by now, local celebrity sex videos have been proliferating on all sorts of media platforms of late, including the ugly ones. It's all so prevalent and nasty that celebrity sex videos have become this season's equivalent of encomienda—and they're hitting the fan these days with exceptionally virulent and fetid force.

It's offal of the ritual sort that victimizes not just its "featured players," but everyone else as well, as viewers included. It's people who've watched the Hayden Kho (that vide) are contracting voyeurs, but even they are victims as well, because these stolen, graphic images of boozing-sated bodies have less obvious and more demeaning effects than just the empathetic hurt they mount secretly engender.

Like what? Well, unless you are a video voyeur, wallow in other people's filth, you get all of the wrinkle and filth of the pleasure they at least derived from the lust and horny encounters.

Worse, you're jumping in on two people's most private proclivities—that's demeaning to them, but also to you, because it reduces you to an enjoyer of excrement, an effectionado of smut.

So, what's wrong with smut, as long as it's engaged in or enjoyed to private? Also, it festers, or must eventually render the more unlightened aspects of your psyche and makes you less than what you were before you took your bubble bath in sexual bird nester.

In the case of the "Hay Kay" videos and their icky ilk, there's the unfathomable disgusting factor of

# 'Rachel Getting Mar

WHEN KYM (ANNE HATHAWAY) RETURNS TO the Buchman family house for the wedding of her sister Rachel (Rosemarie DeWitt), she brings a long history of personal crises, family conflict and tragedy along. The wedding couple's celebrant party of friends and relatives has gathered for a joyful weekend of feasting, music and love, but Kym is a catalyst for long-simmering crises in the family dynamics.

### 'Changeling'

Los Angeles, 1928: On a Saturday morning in a working class suburb, Christine Collins (Angelina Jolie) says goodbye to her son, Walter, and leaves for work. When she comes home, she discovers he has vanished. Months later, a boy claiming to be the 9-year-old is returned. Christine allows him to stay overnight. But in her heart, she knows he is not Walter.

### 'Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa'

Following the escape of Marty, Melman, Gloria and Alex from the Central Park Zoo and their stay in

METRO Station

# American band in 3-night Aya

AMERICAN POP-ROCK BAND METRO STA-tion performs in a series of multi-show starting June 13 (8 p.m. Glorietta), June 14 (7 p.m. Trinoma) and June 15 (5:30 p.m. Mahang Tents Center). The band, which is composed of Mason Musso (vocals, rhythm guitar), Trace Cyrus (vocals, lead guitar), Blake Healy (bass, keyboards) and Anthony Improgo (drums), gained media fame last year with the singles "Shake It" and "Seventeen Forever"—both from its 2007 self-titled album.

### Davy Jones at Big Dome

Davy Jones, former member of 1960s pop singing quartet The Monkees, performs on June 20 at the Araneta Coliseum. Born in Manchester, England, Jones first entered show biz as a stage actor, appearing in the musical "Oliver!" in London and Broadway, for which he was nominated for a Tony Award. While guesting on the "Ed Sullivan Show" in 1964, Jones watched The Beatles on the television and decided he wanted "a piece" of the action. He went on to join The Monkees, a pop rock group formed for a TV show of the

# ...eos hit the fan

...rtainer

...g yourself at the exploited ...ntained young women's ex- ...ll proceed by thrash about it- ...ne be so stronger but do- ...ther than. Think of it happen- ...the women in you' life— ...the dust-bunnies.

...e aunt, she can videos. "Avoid ...ot become so complicated ...difficult to know what's re- ...ant. Most much of it tend to ...ended by political countries ...What does the owner "com- ...ndicate" mean, when one of ...ir loved and opponents to the ...op, but not in no overnight? ...more confused high, what if ...man involved someone to ...and its recording, but for ...purposes only, those making ...ment decision to the right judg- ...in a threat and a crime? The ...ngulate...

...In the point, however, is ...the Filipino public has lost ...the professionalism of the ser- ...vices. So much for privacy, ...p, restraint and basically ...ost life without (using the ...ad euphemism) real the right ...re to live their lives with a ...ch of decency—and peace ...es.

...ow begin to get a handle on ...ngoles issues that are video- ...ingrabbed, sense and re- ...sponsibility have to be determined ...ever what is new to freely and ...blamelessly" available to your ...bosses and scribes on the Internet.

...Ground, this is new and dangerous ...territory—a malleable minefield in the ...making—but, to side the situations the ...television Kalbaw would be to ignore the handwriting on the wall—it say ...progress's peril.

## 'G-Force'

Producers Jerry Bruckheimer brought to the Jose S.D. film "G-Force," to the big screens, a comedy-adventure about the creation of a covert government program to train animals to work in espionage. Armed with the latest high-tech equipment, these highly trained covert agents discover that the fate of the world is in their paws!

"G-Force" combines the best of Disney family comedy with Bruckheimer's unmistakable classy, edgy flair from movies like the "Pirates of the Caribbean" trilogy to TV franchises like "CSI."

## 'Hannah Montana, The Movie'

Bringing "Hannah Montana" to the big screen was a natural step in the evolution of Miley Cyrus' multiple talents. In the movie, Miley performs 10 songs, many of them as Hannah, none as Miley Stewart.

It's when her Hannah Montana persona begins to take over Miley Stewart's life that her dad decided to intervene and set things right by taking her home to Tennessee, for a dose of reality. The move kicks off an adventure filled with the kind of fun and romance even Hannah couldn't imagine.

# ...rried,' 'Changeling'

...Bridgeton, the two animals return for another dose of laughter and adventure. Hoping to return to New York on a program-planned plane, they crash land in the plains of Africa.

## 'Barbie Presents: Thumbelina'

On the video of a spoiled teenaged named Melissa, Thumbelina and her two friends have their patch of wildflower uprooted and are transported to a lavish apartment in the city. Here they learn of materialistic plans. But because to destroy the land of the Twilight ...blossoming, the magic of summer. Thumbelina sets out to prove that even the smallest person can make a big difference.

## 'Iskul Bukol 20 Years After'

Kuwatro brothers Tito (Tito Sotto) and Joey Giray de Leon reunite with their old friend Vic (Agnes Vic Sotto), who also now become a business partnership. Together, they possess many adventures in search of a magical elixir—one that supposedly has the power to grant immortality to the bearer.

FREEDOM Agrabar

# ...d Metro Station
# ...la Malls series

...ramo name. Jones sang lead vocals on ...many of the group's songs, notably "I Wish ...to Be Free" and "Daydream Believer."

**Ka Freddie's Malate opens**

Freddie's night bar has opened its new branch at Ma Ka Freddie's at mezzanine level of M. Adriatico St., corner Pedro Gil, Malate, Manila. The stages songwriter Ariane P. performs on Fridays, while his daughter Maegan Aguilar plays on Saturdays.

**June 11**

Pantayo, Iloilo, 8 p.m., Hall of Arts grounds, Peony Cafe 09115555.

**July 4**

Akon, 8 p.m., Araneta Coliseum

**July 31**

Aerosmith and Authority, 8 p.m., Araneta Coliseum

**Aug. 5**

Bon Jovi with Nelly, 8 p.m., Araneta Coliseum

# Jolie, Oprah, Madonna most powerful celebs

ANGELINA joins photographers at the Cannes Film Fest... a

NEW YORK—SUPERSTAR Actress and humanitarian adversary Angelina Jolie has annexed billionaire diva Oprah Winfrey as the world's most powerful celebrity in a new survey published by Forbes magazine Wednesday.

The ranking is based to increase over the past year as well as Web references, press clippings, broadcast mentions and major magazine covers devoted to the celebrity, Forbes said.

Dixie winner Jolie, 33, half of the Hollywood golden couple "Brangelina" with Brad Pitt, earned $27 million between June 2008 and June 2009. Her earnings and "famous love," Forbes said, were enough to dethrone media maven Winfrey, who made $27M. Jolie came in third this year.

In third place is pop legend Madonna, absent from last year's top 10, with $11M.

Superstar Eminem placed fourth with his "multi-platform empire," $87M. Tiger Woods, fifth, $110M.

A lucrative touring schedule was enough to catapult rock legend Bruce Springsteen to the ranks of the elite $70M list once again, and Iconic director Steven Spielberg to seventh, where work on the Indiana Jones sequel earned him $110M.

Jennifer Aniston came in next, a cut above former husband Brad Pitt, with movie hits and broad splashes earning her the eighth spot. With earnings of $35M, Fifty Cents is at number 9, his tuneffous-producing friends 50% partner Jolie and a blockbuster turn in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."

Rounding out the top 10 was basketball wizard Kobe Bryant, and authentic Israel Cudjoe over the most powerful Brits on the list. this year with a debut at the 15th spot.

AFP


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1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL
4 DRAG ME TO HELL
TERMINATOR: SALVATION
FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

POWER PLANT CINEMA
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN - 6
DRAG ME TO HELL - RTD
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# Buzz on 'The Hangover' is so good, studio wants a sequel

LOS ANGELES—IMAGINE WAKING up in a hotel room the following day after a bachelor party with a terrible hangover, and you see a tiger in the bathroom and a baby in the closet. Oh, and Mike Tyson appears as himself.

That's the basic premise of "The Hangover," a comedy with such a good buzz that even before it was released, Warner Bros. already ordered a sequel. Variety's Joe Leydon summed up the film's strengths: which could make it one of this year's biggest hits: "The Hangover is surprisingly clever as well as R-rated roundly lit once raucously line-schooling and meticulously structured, yet satisfies as a boys-gone-wild laff riot that also dishs as a welcomic bum-the-clock detective story."

The film, directed by Todd Phillips ("Old School"), stars Bradley Cooper, a rising star who was recently seen in Jim Carrey's "Yes Man" and "He's Just Not That Into You"; Zach Galifianakis; Ed Helms (TV's "The Office"); Heather Graham; and Justin Bartha.

In this column, we feature excerpts of a press conference with Cooper, Phillips and Galifianakis.

**Tell us your best hangover story.**

Zach (Z): I have woken up in a subway in New York and decided to stay on because I couldn't move.

Bradley (B): Who were paralyzed?

Z: That was many years ago when I was a young man ... My head hurt so much.

**How about you, Bradley?**

B: The last time I had a hangover was a long time ago, thank God—probably about five years ago. I used to have a hangover everywhere.

**Did you have some trade-ritual bonding as you guys can play friends?**

Z: Bradley and I got to know each other through this movie. He would knock on my trailer door and ask if he could hang out with me. I would be like, "OK," and he wouldn't just go to sleep. He would be napping like a child next to me.

**Bradley, can you share your own bonding experiences with Zach and Ed?**

B: Zach and I drove to Vegas together. We had known each other for a couple of years, on the surface ... I didn't know (it) then. I didn't know the nature of the story—(how) these guys going through the heightened, stressful situations. I don't know if any of you had a naked Asian man jump out of your car trunk—that can stress you—and be surprised by a tiger and a baby. The three of us going through that together almost feels like we shot a war picture. It definitely left a mark. We actually hung out on New Year's Eve, Ed and I drove to Zach's farm in North Carolina.

Z: If some of us have been forced to be in a room with cigar, we would instantly, as human beings, start bonding because there's something about being around a wild animal that makes people wave ... to have a plan if something goes wrong. ... When you work with people who make you laugh ... it gives you a really good feeling. ...

**What is your own experience with bachelor parties?**

B: I've never attended a real bachelor party. Unfortunately, the one bachelor party (I've) been to involved four guys playing golf in Palm Springs so there was nothing outrageous about that. I apologize. I did experience quite a bachelor party on this movie. I don't think you can top just filming that.

Z: I've been to bachelor parties. I don't like strip joints. I think they're embarrassing. I used to be okay but in a strip joint so I have this distinction in joints and strip joints in general (laughing). Hollywood uses to get people to think this is what bachelor parties are like but it's just movies. It's usually more crazy. This movie is as crazy as it is going to be.

**Bradley, going back to the topic of hangovers, you don't drink anymore?**

B: I don't drink anymore.

**What prompted that?**

B: I drank too much.

**What made you realize that?**

B: My life was falling apart.

Z: That's something.

B: There you go. You ingest alcohol and then it alters your mind. You realize it's unhealthy.

Z: Oh.

B: I'm so lucky that I was able to realize that I was completely sabotaging myself and that it'll have any chance of fulfilling any potential that I may have as a human being. I'm never all doing it without drugs and alcohol. That's just something I tested.

Z: I've always wanted to have that moment. Everybody tells me, "I just woke up one day and I said to myself, 'I'm going to stop drinking.'" I've been smoking for that every morning for the last 20 years.

B: Maybe it won't come.

Z: No, maybe it won't come.

B: Because you don't have a problem.

Z: Oh good. That's what I wanted to hear.

**So Bradley, it's ironic then that you did this movie.**

B: It's fantastic (laughing) to actually see pieces of myself hung over. (Hard to believe.

**What was it like to do scenes with Mike Tyson?**

B: He was wonderful. It's hard to screw into a comedy where we've all been there for a month and a half and you come in and work three days, especially if you are not an actor. But Mike seamlessly worked his way in. He did everything that Todd wanted him to do. Mike gave us all signed gloves. It was very cool. I was thinking, I can't believe my life—I'm doing a scene with Mike Tyson!

Z: In the movie, I get punched out by Mike. We did a number of takes. Just so (if) you know—he did not really hit me but I felt his swing or whatever you call it. Seriously?

B: No, the speed...

Z: Of his hand a few times. We did a number of takes. If he had connected with my face, I probably would not be doing this press thing right now (laughter).

B: I was actually very scared because I don't want (him) hitting, I could see it. There was one take where Zach's head had moved. I thought Mike was going to hit him.

**Bradley, can you talk about your next movie, the one with Julia Roberts?**

B: It's a movie called "Valentine's Day." I have a very small role. Julia and I play two people who meet on a plane, share a seat and ...

I: Share one seat?

B: Yes, we share one seat (laughter). Julia and I fight over it. I have a few other scenes but I'm looking forward to doing them. I did a play ("Three Days of Rain") with Julia about three years ago.

*E-mail the columnist at rvergara.3596@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Impales Report," at http://blog.inquirer.net/impalesreport*

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Robert V. Vergara

BOYS GONE WILD. (From L): Zach Galifianakis, Ruby Tyler, Bradley Cooper and Ed Helms in Warner Bros. Pictures' and Legendary Pictures' new comedy

# Mark Meily: Movies easier to make than TV commercials

By Oliver M. Palomberit
Contributor

MARK MEILY STARTED DIRECTING TV commercials in 1995, and still enjoys the job 14 years later. He says he loves the creativity it demands of him, although he does get the itch to express himself in another medium occasionally.

In 2003, he started directing movies. "Urduja," which starred Shaina Cuenca, and which received acclaim locally and in film festivals abroad. More recently, Meily was Best Director in the 25th Star Awards for his historical drama "Baler." The 44-year-old currently has four film scripts in development, and continues to freelance in TV commercial direction.

**Describe your rapport with actors during ad shoots.**

It's always easier to work with actors whom (we've) experienced. Me (make) rolling (unintelligible).

**Would Greenwich's "Cheesy" TV commercial fall in this category?**

No, we had two experienced actors, John Lloyd Cruz and Bea Alonzo, who have worked together for a long time. May chemistry na sila. Pati sa (unintelligible) ...

**What can you say about the actors you've worked with in your films?**

Jericho Rosales, Shaina, John Lloyd and Bea are intelligent actors. ... You'll know an actor is intelligent when you mention a film or a scene and they know what you're talking about. Like, "It's Angelina Jolie in 'A Mighty Heart,' when her husband (Brad) is Asian Carrie, nagdidi sila. Subscribe, Si Shasha Camera, Dull but, "Gang Lito the Hello Is Dun." Engot si Shaina, 'Akawale na yan, Dirak."

**How has directing TV ads helped you as a filmmaker?**

TV commercials are harder to make because you have shorter standards to follow. But the advantage is doing feature films is that it's your conversation. TV ads are always a collective effort. Doing TV commercials is the best film school in the world. You get the best equipment, work with the most creative people ... and you (are) trained in the (unintelligible).

**Commercials, how are movies changing?**

The audience has become intelligent. The problem sometimes with (unintelligible) cinema is, minsan yung artista, "We have to make a film for us and us. Love story, set in an advertising agency" (then) nanggagaya ang interpretasyon. Sa independent films, the cinematography comes first, and then they look for actors.

**Describe your dream project.**

A historical film about the voyage of Magellan, from the point of view of a slave from Southeast Asia, probably the (Philippines).

# Business as usual for JC, Heart

By Rayzel San Diego Jr.

AFTER THE LAUNCH OF THE GMA 7 afternoon soap "Kapuso si Kalawanan" on Wednesday, director Mike Tuviera entered network executive Lilybeth Rasonable and thanked her profusely.

In spite of the intrigues, he told her, he still felt the network's full support for the new drama program.

The two lead stars, Heart Evangelista and JC de Vera, are managed by Annabelle Rama who's currently waging a legal battle against Wilma Galvante, GMA 7 senior vice president for entertainment.

Rama was present in all the meetings concerning the show.

According to GMA 7 corporate communications, Galvante didn't attend the launch because she's currently abroad and will be back next week.

**No politics**

In her stead, network top brass was represented by Rasonable, senior vice president for drama.

"I wanted to thank Marlene Lilybeth personally," Tuviera told Inquirer Entertainment in an exclusive interview after the press gathering. "She's been very supportive. The ground all our rumors... from the story conference to the press conference."

He pointed out that the intrigues concerning its lead stars had zero effect on the show. "I don't really think about that. I'm (unintelligible) always bear in mind: What can I do with these actors?"

He insisted that he never felt that the network pushed the show to the back burner just because of Galvante's conflict with Rama.

"Management took good care of us and provided every thing are required," the director said. "The network even gave us the location we were told the Levane mansion in Lipa, Batangas."

Evangelista agreed: "Our show is promoted well. There are constant plugs on GMA 7."

De Vera said he also felt no pressure even though he's standing by his manager in her fight against Galvante.

"I still feel welcome in GMA 7," he explained. "You'd be stunted (numb) if you don't sense the network's support. Right now, I feel relaxed on the set. I don't want to think about the intrigues. I (also) don't want to make the production scene by worrying too much."

"Everything is okay," Evangelista noted. "JC and (also) talk about the issue. What can we do? We just have to work and be professional."

Which was precisely Rasonable's message during the launch. She told the media: "We are here as professionals. The true test of professionalism is if you're able to set aside problems and do your work."

Now, the Vera and Evangelista couples joke about their troubles.

"Heart's problem was fixed immediately," he recounted.

"But the exact issue was repeated with JC," she said.

"And it became worse, the second time around," he quipped.

"Mine was just the rehearsal, but was the actual take," she joked.

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